

Tackling flytipping on private land

Your guide to clearing up - and stopping dumpers in the first place



Flytipping: their waste on your land

Local authorities deal with flytipping on public land day in, day out. But flytippers can target almost anywhere – including private land.

What is it?

A bin bag in a ditch. Worn-out tyres in a field. Construction waste beside a domestic bin. These are all examples of flytipping: collections of waste dropped somewhere they don't belong. Unlike littering – which tends to be impulsive, thoughtless, and occasionally accidental – flytipping is usually intentional, and often premeditated.

Why does it matter?

The list of negative impacts of flytipping is long:

- **Social** – it makes our landscapes look ugly, impacts the mental health of local people, and can increase crime rates.
- **Financial** – as well as the money it costs to clear up, flytipping can dampen property prices and deter tourist spending.
- **Ecological** – if items dumped include hazardous chemicals, they threaten our ecosystem, harm our wildlife and can pose a risk of physical injury, or even death.



Scotland's flytipping problem

Flytipping isn't dealt with by just one agency, and it's difficult to measure. But estimates – and conservative ones at that – show that around 61,000 flytipping incidents happen in Scotland each year. That averages to around 170 every single day¹.

By the same reckoning, around 26,000 tonnes of waste are flytipped each year, racking up a cleaning bill for Scotland's authorities in the region of £11 million.



Your legal responsibilities

You have a responsibility to make sure that waste dumped on your land is removed safely. This means it's up to you to:

- **Deal with hazards** – some commonly flytipped items can be dangerous. Hazardous liquids or sharp objects? It's up to you to protect people and animals. Consider placing a barrier around the waste until it can be removed.
- **Arrange for removal** – you can do this yourself if you have a Waste Carrier's Licence. If not, you need to use a contractor who does. Either way, you're liable for the waste removal costs.
- **Report to your local authority** – there's a good reason to keep your local authority in the loop about flytipping – tracking every incident helps them spot patterns and catch repeat offenders.



Help is at hand



The responsibility for waste removal falls on you, but there is help available:

- In some cases, local authorities may agree to collect flytipped waste in return for you upping your flytipping prevention efforts. They may also give you special permission to remove waste yourself. Ask your council for information.
- Neighbours also tackling flytipping? Start a local action group to boost your impact by monitoring, reporting and tackling the problem together.
- Look online to see if any community groups operate near you – and if they offer any help clearing flytipped sites. Groups often do this for free, and may be able to help monitor the site if it is open to public access.



IN FOCUS

Working with the community



Who?

Renfrewshire Council

The problem?

A vacant plot on the Hillington Park business estate became a magnet for Renfrewshire's flytippers. The park's owner and estate managers had led a hard-fought campaign to keep the culprits away – but the flytippers kept coming back.

What they did

The local council formed a partnership with the landowner, and used funding from Zero Waste Scotland to amplify the park's prevention efforts. They installed a barrier that doubled as a community art project and asked local design students to adorn it with art inspired by the upcoming Commonwealth Games.

Results:

Since the hoarding went up, flytipping has stopped.

How to get rid of flytipped waste

Hiring someone to remove waste from your land? Make sure they're registered with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). You'll find a list of licensed waste carriers on the [SEPA website](#).



Follow these steps to make sure you deal with waste responsibly:

1 Take care – don't touch anything: some flytipped waste can be hazardous.



2 Record details – write down where and when you found the waste. If it's safe, take photographs, and if a vehicle is involved, record the registration plate details.



3 Report – contact your local authority and, if there's potentially hazardous waste involved, SEPA too.



4 Secure the waste – in case there's an investigation. Make sure no one tampers with what's been dumped; it might include evidence.



5 Restrict access – if you think more flytipping is likely, or that the waste could be hazardous to people, animals or the environment, erect a temporary barrier.



6 Choose a licenced waste carrier – only licenced contractors can remove flytipped rubbish. Not registered? Find a licensed carrier on SEPA's website, or by phoning 03000 99 66 99.



7 Due diligence – ask your waste carrier for documentation of the details: the type of waste involved, who removed it, where it was taken for recycling or disposal.



8 Keep your receipts – you may be able to claim back the waste removal costs if enforcement action is taken.

How to report flytipping



Remember, flytippers know they're doing something illegal and aren't going to welcome you witnessing their crime. Never put yourself at risk by intervening.



Spotted someone flytipping? It's your duty to report it. Contact your local authority or call dumb dumpers on 08452 304090. You can also report it online at dumbdumpers.org

If a flytipping act is still in progress you should call the police.

Prevention

The costs of cleaning flytipped waste quickly add up. It's always best to stop the problem happening in the first place.



IN FOCUS

South Lanarkshire's lay-by intervention²

Who?

SEPA/South Lanarkshire Council

The problem

A secluded lay-by next to a steep glen had become a target for flytipping. Everything from household waste to chicken entrails were regularly sent cascading down the hill to a stream at the bottom.

What they did

The council built a barrier of earth along the lay-by and installed sheep-netting down the bank so flytippers couldn't hurl waste over the edge so easily. The style of the new banking preserved the natural beauty of the spot, and thanks to savings in clean-up costs, the measures paid for themselves within a year.



Set out the risks

Leave flytippers under no illusions – put up signs telling them your land is under surveillance and anyone caught flytipping will be prosecuted.

ARTWORK

The ZWS Flytipping Prevention Communications Toolkit

You'll find lots of free-to-use, context-specific materials in our flytipping prevention communications toolkit.

Limit access

Flytippers see an open gate as an invitation. Keep yours closed – and locked if you can – whenever you're not around. Need to maintain a public right of way? Use boulders, earth barriers or strategically-placed tree stumps to keep vehicles out, but let walkers and cyclists in.

Increase visibility

Flytipping thrives where the culprits think there's no chance of getting caught. Give them nowhere to hide. Maintain road verges, cut down overgrown hedges, and improve lighting so the tippers can't sneak in under the cover of darkness.

Clean up

Untidy areas are likely to attract more flytippers, so it's best to remove waste quickly.

