

On Earth Day, IDOT Reminds Motorists to ‘Think Before You Throw’

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SPRINGFIELD – As the world celebrates Earth Day, the Illinois Department of Transportation is joining its Adopt-A-Highway program partners and volunteer groups to remind motorists that we must all do our part to protect the environment – and our pocketbooks – by disposing of trash properly through its “Think Before You Throw” anti-littering initiative. Gov. JB Pritzker has designated April “Anti-Roadside Littering Campaign Month” in Illinois.

“On Earth Day and every day, we are committed to keeping our roadsides free of litter,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “Clean streets and highways provide obvious environmental benefits and improve quality of life in communities throughout Illinois. But we can’t do it alone. Through our ‘Think Before You Throw’ campaign, we’re asking all Illinoisans to make the right choice to discard trash in an appropriate receptacle.”

The initiative aims to reduce roadside litter, keep our roads safer and raise awareness of the impact of roadside litter in communities throughout the state.

Last year, IDOT spent approximately \$6.1 million on litter pickup, the equivalent of resurfacing 30 miles of road or purchasing 40 new maintenance trucks that also plow snow in winter. In addition to the eyesore factor and cleanup costs, roadside litter causes distractions that can lead to dangerous crashes and requires maintenance operations that put workers in hazardous situations. If you encounter maintenance vehicles and workers in litter pickup operations, slow down, move over and give them space – it’s the law.

To view a short video on the impacts of litter in Illinois, click [here](#) or visit IDOT’s [YouTube channel](#).

More facts for Earth Day:

- Litter kills plants and animals.
- Litter is unsightly. No one likes litter in their community.
- Littering is a problem that’s easily controlled. Use a trash can instead.
- Littering is illegal and subject to a fine of up to \$1,500. In addition to other penalties, violators may be required to maintain litter control over a portion of that highway for 30 days.

If you’d like to do more to help keep Illinois roads clean, consider joining IDOT’s Adopt-A-Highway program, which is now resuming normal operations after limiting activities in 2020 due to COVID-19. The program partners IDOT with volunteer groups to help keep the state’s non-interstate roadsides clean. Anyone can apply by completing an application on the IDOT [website](#) and “adopting” a two-mile section of highway.

Please email DOT.AAH@illinois.gov or call (217) 557-3224 if you have any questions or wish to join the 10,000 volunteers currently involved in the Adopt-A-Highway program.