

Trash the Poop!

Trash the Poop is a City of Columbia program that encourages pet owners to pick up their pet's waste and discard it in the trash. The program provides community groups and organizations free pet waste stations in exchange for performing specific activities that encourage picking up pet waste.



To join the program, each organization or group must:

- Briefly describe why their neighborhood needs a pet waste station (Max: 100 words)
- Designate a team of at least 3 people to promote the Trash the Poop program in your neighborhood
- Recruit 10 residents to sign a Trash the Poop pledge form
- Agree to install a pet waste station within 1 month of receipt
- Agree to properly maintain the pet waste station (see additional information on “Trash the Poop Pet Waste Station: Operation & Maintenance”)
- Agree to inform residents of the presence of the pet waste station
- Agree to submit pictures of the installed pet waste station and residents using this station within 3 months of receiving the station

Each neighborhood that joins the program will receive:

- A presentation by a Trash the Poop representative explaining the program to residents
- One pet waste station, including a sign, bag dispenser, starter bags, and post (concrete is the responsibility of the applicant)
- Promotional material for the program including:
 - Posters
 - Trash the Poop pledge form
 - Leash bag dispensers for every resident who signs the pledge
- Recognition on the City of Columbia's website at <http://www.columbiasc.net/stormwater/educational-programs/trash-the-poop/>

Additional rules:

1. The City of Columbia has a limited number of pet waste stations to give out each year under this program. Neighborhoods may qualify to receive one pet waste station every two years. Qualified neighborhoods will receive pet waste stations on a first-come-first-serve basis.
2. By accepting a pet waste station from this program, the applicant accepts ownership of the pet waste station and all responsibility for its installation and maintenance. The applicant should obtain permission from the property owner before installing the station and follow all applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations.

- Used pet waste bags should be thrown in the trash. Not picking up after your dog or throwing used bags on the ground or in storm drains is illegal in the City of Columbia under (Code 1979, § 9-5026; Ord. No. 2001-070, 6-26-02) and can earn a fine.

What's the harm in leaving my pet's waste on the ground?

When it rains, anything on the ground is washed into our local waterways—and that includes pet waste. Pet waste increases the amount of nutrients in waterways. That may sound like a good thing, but extra nutrients means extra plant growth, and when those plants die it causes oxygen to be removed from the water. No oxygen means no fish!

How does leaving pet waste on the ground affect humans?

Pet waste has three times more pathogens (bacteria, parasites, and viruses) in it than human waste. These pathogens can cause diseases in humans and animals. A few of these pathogens and their impacts on humans are listed below.

- salmonellosis - the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea
- campylobacteriosis - causes diarrhea
- cryptosporidium - a parasite carried by dogs, cats, and calves
- toxocarosis - roundworms transmitted from dogs to humans often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever or cough

How do we know leaving pet waste on the ground is a problem?

Water quality monitoring has found high levels of fecal coliform in several local creeks. Fecal coliform is an indication that the water is contaminated with fecal material.

Is it OK if I leave my pet's waste on the grass?

No. Pet waste breaks down very slowly. Even if it is in grass, there is still an opportunity for some of it to wash away when it rains; plus no one wants to step in it or have kids playing in or around pet waste.

I'm just one person. What difference does it make if I don't pick up my pet's waste?

The average dog defecates about 3/4 pounds of feces every day. If no one picked up their pet's waste, imagine how much would pile up in a month. Now imagine all of that washing into our rivers! But you can help! Pick up your pet's waste and dispose of it in the trash. To be extra green, install a pet waste septic system.

Is it a crime to not pick up my pet's waste?

Yes, the City of Columbia prohibits the disposal of pet excreta on public or private property (Ord. No. 2001-070, 6-26-02), and requires that all waste, including pet fecal waste, be disposed of properly and in a manner that does NOT introduce pollution into storm drains or generally pollutes the environment (Ord. No. 2011-095, 12-20-11).

For more information contact:

stormwater@columbiasc.net