

# Open Dumps

Abandoned piles of household garbage, bags of yard waste, appliances, old barrels, used tires, and demolition debris such as lumber, shingles, pipes and asbestos can threaten the health of humans, wildlife, and the environment. Known as open dumps, these sites can be found throughout Illinois -- heaped at the bottom of ravines, in empty lots and pastures, and along roadsides. An open dump is an illegal waste disposal site and should not be confused with a permitted municipal solid waste landfill or a recycling facility. If allowed to remain, open dumps often grow larger, and may attract dumping of both solid and hazardous wastes.



Open dumps pose the following health, safety, and environmental threats:

- Fire and explosion
- Inhalation of toxic gases
- Injury to children playing on or around the dump site
- Disease carried by mosquitoes, flies, and rodents
- Contamination of streams, rivers and lakes
- Contamination of soil and groundwater
- Contamination of drinking water
- Damage to plant and wildlife habitats
- Decrease in the quality of life to nearby residents and the local community

Open dumps create a public nuisance, divert land from more productive uses, and depress the value of surrounding land.

## **Open Dumping Is Prohibited by Law!**

Causing or allowing open dumping is illegal, and may result in substantial penalties.

## **Report Open Dumping to Your Local Authorities!**

Local law enforcement and public health officials have a duty to enforce open dumping laws. Counties and municipalities may impose additional penalties for open dumping.



Local authorities have the advantage of being close to the crime scene and can:

- Investigate to find evidence of the persons responsible for the open dumping
- Require an immediate clean up of the area
- Levy their own local fines for open dumping
- Issue citations or notices to appear in court
- Report the site to the Illinois EPA as an I-RID candidate or St. Clair County Clean Sweep
- Patrol the problem area after the clean up

### **What if I discover open dumping, on my property?**

Report open dumping to local law enforcement authorities or the local health department immediately.

Protect yourself against future open dumping:

- Put up barriers (locked cables and gates) to prevent physical access to the property.
- Post warning signs such as "NO DUMPING" or "NO TRESPASSING".
- Clean up dump sites immediately so as not to encourage others to dump.
- Notify local law enforcement and health departments as well as keep a log book. Record the date, time and description of what is dumped, and which authorities you notified each time you found signs of dumping.
- Ask local law enforcement officials to patrol the problem area more frequently.
- Alert adjoining property owners of the open dumping problem and enlist their help in a neighborhood watch program.

The dumper and generators of the waste are liable and subject to enforcement action. Further, the landowner has a duty to prevent open dumping and to clean up any pollution on his/her property.

### **Local Assistance**

For local assistance contact your local authorities:

- City Police
- City Public Health Department
- County Sheriff
- County Health Department
- State's Attorney
- Illinois EPA Regional Office

[St. Clair County Open Burning & Open Dumping Brochure](#)

\* Some information provided by the Illinois EPA.