

Public Service Announcement

June 12, 2014

City of Edmonton

Butting out responsibly? Coffee's on us

The City of Edmonton's cigarette litter enforcement and education campaign has officially launched for the summer.

Bylaw officers will now be regularly patrolling downtown and other areas around the city, encouraging smokers to butt out responsibly. Improper cigarette butt disposal may result in a \$250 fine.

"The 2013 litter audit has shown we're making great strides in reducing cigarette litter on city streets," says Lisi Monro, Capital City Clean Up Program Manager. "While cigarette butts show a 29.4% decrease from 2012, they still represent a large component of small litter found on our streets, so it's important that we continue to reinforce responsible cigarette disposal."

Irresponsibly discarded cigarette butts aren't only an eyesore – they're also the number one cause of fire fatalities.

"Some of the most dangerous and devastating home and grass fires are caused by the improper disposal of smoking materials," says Deputy Chief of Public Safety Russell Croome, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services. "Many people underestimate how quickly a smoldering cigarette can ignite surrounding material, so it's important that residents are made aware of the potential hazards involved with discarding them improperly."

Enforcement officers will not only be issuing fines, they will also be recognizing smokers who properly dispose of cigarette butts by providing them with a complimentary gift card from program partner Tim Hortons. Approximately 200 gift cards were handed out during last year's campaign.

"Our goal with this campaign is to encourage smokers to think about where they're disposing of their cigarettes," says Grant Blaine, Coordinator for the City of Edmonton Community Peace Officer section. "Education and awareness is always our first priority. We want to deter bylaw infractions but also reinforce positive behaviour and recognize smokers who do make the effort to put their cigarette butts into ashtrays."

The enforcement campaign runs until September.

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