



# **Voluntary Code of Practices Information Booklet**

## **For Local Businesses**

***For the Prevention & Reduction of Litter***

# Guidelines & Information

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## **Introduction**

As people live busier lives, work later, and eat on the go more frequently, they also drop more litter. There has been an increase in all the types of litter on our streets, especially 'food on the go' or rather, 'fast food' items. Most people find fast food litter one of the most offensive types of litter and are becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental problem it causes, as well as its depreciating aesthetic consequence. As part of MESS' commitment to a cleaner, safer and greener community, the society has developed a Voluntary Code of Practices for businesses that sell 'food on the go', that suggests what they can do to help reduce the amount of fast food related litter in the community.

## **Purpose of the Code**

The Code is a list of recommendations, involving the four areas of participation; public education, reducing packaging, proper waste handling & litter management; that businesses may pledge to perform, in partnership with the MESS Society, the District of Mission, and other interested partners to reduce and prevent litter, and improve the local environment.

The Code recognizes that businesses themselves do not drop the litter, but that they must take responsibility by playing their part in improving the local area and therefore, the Voluntary Code of Practices is designed to help businesses work together with other concerned parties to create local solutions for local problems.

## **Significance of Reduced Litter**

The Quality of the Local Environment is Important to People:

- How places look and are perceived
- How safe and happy people feel about living in an area
- How attractive areas look to tourists, existing and new business investors, etc.

A Litter Free Environment is Important to:

- Secure quality long-term commercial investors
- Attract good, long-term tenants
- Deter anti-social behaviours
- Maintain the health of the environment

## Opportunities & Limitations

### The Code RECOGNIZES THAT;

- Businesses themselves do not drop the litter, but that they must take responsibility by playing their part in improving the local area.
- A given business premise can contribute to and is affected by litter on others' land – unmanaged litter and refuse from one land moves (blows or flows) to the land of others.
- Businesses suffer from customers dropping litter & litter degrades the perception of a business and will reduce sales - businesses are in part, responsible for managing this issue.
- The accumulation of litter depends on a number of factors including; pedestrian & vehicular traffic & intensity of activity in an area, natural physical features of the location, time of year, nature and condition of surrounding areas, etc.
- It is good business practice to maintain a clean and tidy property.
- A litter free ground can not be maintained at all times, and that the presence of a few small items or litter and refuse may occur.
- On some occasions, circumstances may render it impracticable to maintain cleanliness of site (severe weather conditions, special events in practice, etc.).
- Good management of litter requires constant attention.
- Local agreements are best and enable everyone to play their part in pledging to keep the environment clean and tidy.
- There are different types of businesses that sell “food on the go” and that not all recommendations given to prevent and reduce litter are suitable for each business.

## **The Code RECOGNIZES four areas of practice to reduce and prevent litter by businesses;**

### **Public Education**

- Businesses can be powerful role models to customers, by setting a strong example by keeping grounds maintained and displaying anti-litter advertisements.

### **Litter Management**

- Litter begets litter and it is in a business' best interest to maintain the cleanliness and tidiness of their grounds.

### **Proper Waste Handling**

- If businesses do not manage the disposal of and the storage of their waste properly it will become litter.

### **Reducing Packaging:**

- Excessive packaging results in more litter and businesses can save costs and reduce litter, by reducing packaging.

## Definitions

To understand the Voluntary Code of Practices and to help businesses determine their pledge(s) to prevent and reduce litter it is important to identify the following:

### LITTER

While there is no universal definition for the term litter, the term implies:

- Trash that is put in the wrong place
- Environmental degradation caused by human agents
- Materials associated with smoking, eating, and drinking that are improperly discarded.

### 'FOOD ON THE GO' LITTER

"Food on the go" litter is defined as any consumable item and its related packaging improperly disposed of in the environment. This can include triangular sandwich packaging, drinks cartons, confectionery wrappers, wrappings of burgers & chicken products, potato chips bags, bottles and more. The term 'fast food' is also used to encompass food that is eaten 'on the go'.

### 'FOOD ON THE GO' OUTLETS

Types of operators selling 'food on the go' include primary outlets and secondary outlets. A primary outlet is an outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food for immediate consumption to customers. A secondary outlet is an outlet that sells food for immediate consumption but this is not its sole function.

Type	Description
<b><u>Primary Outlet</u></b>	<b>An outlet for the main or sole purpose to sell food on the go to customers</b>
Primary –Small	Single premise, or family owned – for example, pizzerias and coffee shops
Primary – Medium	Chain operations such as sandwich shops
Primary- Large	<u>Quick Service Industry</u> , National or International franchises such as burger franchises – and most likely drive thru dominated
Mobile Outlets	Hot dog stands, ice cream van, etc.
<b><u>Secondary Outlet</u></b>	<b>An outlet that sells food for immediate consumption, but this is not its sole or main function</b>
Small Outlet	Single premise or few nuclear units or family owned – for

	example, newsagents, corner stores, gas station, etc.
Medium – Large Outlets	Medium shop chains to high street retailers & supermarkets...

## The Voluntary Code of Practices

**Step One:** Understand the litter around your business.

**Step Two:** Provide public education on litter prevention & reduction.

**Step Three:** Reduce waste from your business.

**Step Four:** Manage waste properly.

**Step Five:** Manage the litter around your business.

### Step One: Understanding Litter around Your Business

Understanding how litter comes to reside on your business premise can help your business better manage the cleanliness of your area. **(See Appendix A)**

1. When, where, how and from whom does litter arise in your area? (staff, customers, pedestrians, vehicular traffic, etc.)
2. What type of litter is around your grounds?
3. What time is the shop most busy? What time(s) are the largest volumes of food packaging and cigarettes littered in the area?
4. Do staff and customers smoke? Are there smoking bins on the property?
5. Is there a litter bin provided on the grounds? Is it accessible to everyone? Is it well managed (clean and not overflowing)?
6. How is business waste disposed of? Is the garbage disposal area locked, kept tidy, emptied regularly, etc.?
7. What do you do currently to reduce litter?
8. How often does your business perform litter clean-ups?

### Step Two: Provide Public Education on Litter Prevention & Reduction

- Campaign to change people's attitudes and to get them to stop dropping litter in the first place.

- Expose the public to continuous anti-littering information across a number of channels. Promotion of anti-littering messages can include; on premise posters, signage on drive thru exits, anti-litter slogans on packaging, etc.

### **Step Three: Reduce Waste from your Business**

- Find ways to reduce your business' product packaging.
- Look to increase the amount of recycled and/or compostable materials (if packaging for a product can not be reduced).
- Ask all customers if they require a bag, condiments, serviettes, and/or additional items with their purchase(s) – to reduce waste. Train staff to do so with each customer.

### **Step Four: Manage Waste Properly**

- Manage waste properly, making sure it is stored correctly, and that bins are emptied regularly.
- Have suitable space set aside for waste storage & appropriate containers to prevent waste from escaping.
- Keep containers in good condition, with particular attention to the lid to ensure containers are properly closed (and locked).
- Clean up waste spillages, caused by the waste contractor or disposal staff, immediately to prevent litter.
- Make litter & waste disposal instructions available to all staff involved in waste disposal.
- Provide litter bins on premise available and accessible to customers.
- Place a litter bin on drive thru exits (at car window level).
- Implement a recycling and/or composting program for business waste.
- Make recycling and composting bins available to customers.
- Consider providing more litter bins in the community, and work in partnership with the District of Mission, to address the problem of litter that travels beyond your business premise into other urban and/or rural areas. (Sponsoring a litterbin is a good way for your business to advertise locally, and create a good impression of your approach to litter and waste.)

### **Step Five: Manage the Litter around your Business**

- Maintain the cleanliness and tidiness of your business premise.
- Clear all litter from your business premise, with particular attention paid to flower beds, planters, litter bins and waste disposal areas, storm drains, and ditches.
- Have a safety protocol for litter management. Advise staff involved in litter collection of this safety protocol (See appendix C).



- Keep a litter management record, keeping track of the type and amount of litter collected off their premise and how often – litter picking records can be displayed to customers, business management and other interested parties to show litter control participation and community involvement.
- Adopt a few 'blocks' around your businesses to keep tidy.

## **Pledge Instructions**

The pledge form provided in your package outlines litter control practices businesses can pledge to make as a part of MESS's Voluntary Code of Practices which includes the four areas of participation; public education, reducing packaging, proper waste handling and litter management.

If you wish to join MESS's litter control campaign to prevent and reduce litter in the District of Mission, by committing to the Voluntary Code of Practices, please complete the checklist on the form provided, indicating which litter control pledges your business agrees to undertake.

Not all pledges will be suitable for your business and therefore use all the information provided above to decide which is most appropriate for you. Businesses are encouraged to commit to as many litter control efforts as are suitable for their workplace.

Businesses may already be active in litter management & other strategies to reduce and prevent litter and may already exercise several of the practices listed on the form provided. If this is the case, businesses are asked to identify practices already engaged in as well as identify new practices they intend to implement.

By making a pledge to prevent and reduce litter, in partnership with MESS's Voluntary Code of Practices, you agree to uphold your pledge for the duration of two years. After the term of two years, we encourage businesses to review their litter control efforts and to renew their partnership & pledges.

By pledging in partnership with the Voluntary Code of Practices, business parties fully understand and assume all risks and dangers involved in the participation of litter clean-up (not limited to picking up dangerous debris, collision with passing traffic, etc.) and waive any and all claims against MESS. To minimize any risks involved in litter collection activity, MESS strongly recommends businesses implement a litter clean-up safety protocol before commencing litter collection.

All businesses that make pledges to the Voluntary Code of Practices will be provided with a certificate of participation identifying pledges made, acknowledged and signed by our Board of Directors. Participating businesses are encouraged to permit MESS to identify their support and pledges in the society's litter control campaign promotion (IE biannual newsletter, community displays, etc.)

## Acknowledgements

### Reducing Litter Caused by Food on the Go – Voluntary Code of Practices for Local Businesses

Developed by Laura Cameron with input from the MESS Board of Directors and the District of Mission's Environmental Services staff.



**MISSION**  
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For more information about the information included in this package contact the MESS Program Coordinator at **(604) 826-9423** or [info@messociety.org](mailto:info@messociety.org)

\* \* \* \* \*

### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO:

2006. Code of Practices on Litter and Refuse. Department for Environment, Food and Housing Affairs.  
Crown Copyright.

ENCAMS. Keep Britain Tidy Campaign. [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org)

## **Appendix A**

### **Understanding Litter around your Business**

Business:	Completed by:
Address:	Job Title:
Telephone:	Date:

1. When, where, how and from whom does litter arise in your area? (staff, customers, pedestrians, vehicular traffic, etc.)
  - a. What time is the shop most busy?
  - b. At what times are the largest volumes of food and packaging littered around your business?
  - c. Who is doing the littering?
2. What type of litter is found around your business premise?
3. In which location is the most litter deposited?
4. Do staff and customers smoke? Are there smoking bins on the property?
5. Is there a litter bin provided on the grounds? Is it accessible to everyone?
6. Are litter bins well managed (clean and not overflowing)? How often are they emptied? Secured lids?

7. Are more litter bins required? If so, where could they be placed?
8. How is business waste disposed of? Is the garbage disposal area locked, kept tidy, emptied regularly, etc.?
9. How often does your business perform litter clean-ups around your business premise?
10. What do you do currently to prevent and reduce litter? (IE promotion & advertising means, litter management, reduced packaging, waste handling, etc.)
11. Any other issues to note? (IE. vandalism, graffiti, etc.)

**COMMENTS:**

**MAKE A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR FILES AND SEND ORIGINAL TO MESS**

## **APPENDIX B PLEDGE FORM**

### **Agreement:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Business Name)

**pledges to perform the following litter control practices as a part of their commitment to follow MESS's Voluntary Code of Practices, designed to reduce and prevent litter in the District of Mission:**

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Public Education**

- ☐ Display anti-littering message on business premises
  - ☐ at point of sales
  - ☐ on take-away items
  - ☐ on drive thru exit
  - ☐ inside store (posters, etc.)
  - ☐ on garbage bins
  - ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Use local media to run anti-litter messages (newspapers, radio, etc.)
- ☐ Run local anti-litter education campaign (IE in schools, etc.)
- ☐ Support local environmental projects and regeneration activities: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Litter Management**

- ☐ Clean ALL litter from land belonging to business two-three times a week
- ☐ Clean ALL litter from land belonging to business once a day
- ☐ Clean ALL litter from land belonging to business more than once a day
- ☐ Clean litter from neighboring land (25m or more from land belonging to business) a minimum of once a month.
- ☐ Have a litter picking action plan (included in staff-training) & scheduled litter picks
- ☐ Keep a litter picking record (type of litter, how often, etc.)
- ☐ Share litter picking record with interested parties (MESS)
- ☐ Involve employees/employers in community litter clean-ups and/or 'adopt' a 'block' as to maintain litter as a team effort
- ☐ Sponsor a team to adopt an area to pick up litter.

#### **Waste Handling**

- ☐ Keep waste receptacle maintained, locked and secured.
- ☐ Provide litter bin(s) on land belonging to business for customers
- ☐ Provide litter bin(s) on drive thru exit
- ☐ Regularly check & empty all litter bins on property
- ☐ Provide & empty cigarette stub litter bin
- ☐ Sponsor a litter bin in the community to reduce far-reaching litter
- ☐ Implement a recycling and/or composting program for business waste

**Reduce Packaging**

- ☐ Review packaging to identify ways to reduce waste
- ☐ Ask all customers if they require condiments, serviettes or additional items
- ☐ Ask all customers if they require a bag
- ☐ Switch to recyclable and/or compostable to-go items (50% minimum)

**APPENDIX B  
INFORMATION FORM**

**Checklist for Participating Businesses**

Read thru the Voluntary Code of Practices Information & Guidelines Booklet:

- Read definitions and identify your type of “food on the go” outlet
- Review steps 1-5 of the code
- Review pledge instructions
- Fill out pledge form
- Fill out information form

*(Please include the following in PRINT.)*

<b>Business:</b>	
<b>Type of Business:</b>	
<b>Business Manager:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	

Do you understand by pledging in partnership with the Code, you fully understand and assume all risks and dangers involved in the participation of litter clean-up?

Yes     /     No

Will you devise a safety protocol for litter collection and inform all involved personnel with litter collection safety instructions?

Yes     /     No

May MESS identify your support and pledges to the Code in the society’s promotional materials (IE biannual newsletter, community displays, etc.)? If no, explain...

Yes     /     No

# **Appendix D**

## **Litter Management Forms**

### **Staff Training & Safety Information**

#### **Staff Training Suggestions:**

- Read the ‘Limitations & Opportunities’ of litter management to employees (refer to pages 3 &4).
- Explain the MESS Voluntary Code of Practices and your businesses’ PLEDGE to reduce and prevent litter in Mission, B.C.
- Create a litter cleaning schedule for employees and advise employees of safety protocol before commencing litter clean-up duty. See sample next page.
- Advise litter control staff to separate the recyclables from the collected litter waste – to be disposed of properly.

#### **Safety Information:**

- Never touch any litter with your hands! Use a litter picker. If needed for larger objects, wear a pair of gloves.
- Do not blindly reach around trees/bushes for litter – it may be dangerous (sharp objects).
- If cleaning up litter on your business premise requires persons to collect litter along street sides – advise employees to work towards oncoming traffic (if possible), while always being on the look out for traffic, and if required, cross the street at designated crosswalks.
- No roughhousing or horseplay while participating in litter collection activity.
- Put a protocol in place for hazardous litter. For example:
  - broken glass (IE sweep into dustpan)
  - razor blades (IE use picker – dispose of in sealed container before putting into bin)
  - needles (IE use sharps container)
  - dead animals
  - used condoms & diapers
  - empty chemical buckets
  - questionable containers
- Report all injuries to supervisor.

## Appendix D

### Litter Management Forms

#### Litter Clean-Up Chart

WEEK/MONTH/YEAR:

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DAY	TIME	LOCATION	PICKED BY	COMMENTS
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				