

Alarming facts about the war on gum and butts

- The most frequently cited reason for gum and butts littering is no convenient point of disposal – no bins or not enough bins.
- Chewing gum is used by 28 million people in the UK.
- 200 million cigarette butts are thrown away each day in the UK. (Source: ENCAMS)
- In the UK alone more than a billion packs of chewing gum are sold every year.
- In the UK, cigarettes account for over 40% of street litter. (Source: ENCAMS)
- Up to 3.5 billion deposits of gum have at one time or another been spat or dropped on to our streets.
- 92 per cent of city paving stones have had gum stuck to them.
- In 2003, local councils received half-a-million complaints about littered gum.
- Each piece dropped costs from 10p to 30p remove.
- It costs approximately £20,000 to clean up chewing gum in an average town centre. The clean up has to be carried out several times each year. (Source: ENCAMS)



- 122 tons of cigarette butts and cigarette related litter is dropped every day in the UK. (Source: ENCAMS)
- It takes 17 weeks to remove chewing gum from Oxford Street, but only 10 days for the street to be covered in gum again.
- Street cleaning in the UK costs £413m – this is paid for by council taxes.
- Chewed gum takes up to 5 years to biodegrade.
- As the anti-smoking lobby's campaign gains momentum, employers are banning smoking from not only indoor areas but outdoor areas too – employees are forced out on to public spaces where the facilities are limited to non-existent.
- A full smoking ban in pubs and clubs is likely to substantially increase the cigarette litter burden.

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“Without proper facilities, smokers will turn our streets into a giant ashtray,” said Alan Woods, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy.

“Cigarette butts, boxes and matches are already our biggest litter problem, blighting 90% of our high streets – so we need to act now and ensure smokers have what they need to dispose of their rubbish correctly.”

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- In Ireland, 61% of people believe litter from smoking has risen since the Republic introduced a similar ban back in March 2004. ■