

Protocol for Island County Litter Assessment Surveys

1. Selecting Sites.

Prior to survey, measure and map site. Exclude sites with much inaccessible areas (steep slopes, thick brush, etc.).

Site types to include for each of 4 geographic areas:

- State highway
- School vicinity
- Grocery store vicinity
- Residential/rural road

Site length: Approximately 100 m / 300 ft, adjusted to landmarks that facilitate replication. (For me, 1 "pace" (from left heel to left heel) with slightly extended steps is equivalent to 5 ft, so 300 ft = 60 paces or 120 steps.) Distance measurements were estimated by walking paces.

Site width: From pavement edge to 40 ft, litter catch-point, or other designated termination point. Record maximum and minimum width.

2. Instructions for Site Surveys

Follow instructions on Survey Site Map to locate site.

Wear orange vest, safety helmet and gloves. Park safely and walk safely. Keep aware of traffic and stay off road.

Complete both sides of the survey form (Litter Assessment Survey and Site Documentation Form)

Walk the route as mapped, one person bagging litter and the other recording on survey sheet. When finished, return along the same route, collecting and recording anything missed on the first pass. (Exceptions to this were made at a few sites and are noted in the directions on the map.)

Counting protocols:

Count broken pieces that are obviously from a single container as one container.

Count a full fast food bag as one bag (not as separate items contained).

A cup, lid and straw found together count as one cup, not separate cup, lid, straw, just as a soda bottle with cap is one bottle, we don't also record the cap. But when a cap, straw, or lid is found alone, it is recorded under those categories.

Whenever possible, fit an item into a specific category. Use MISCELLANEOUS as a last resort. If you find items of particular interest, write them in under OTHER.

Review the distinction between Container and Packaging in the list of Examples.

General categories are:

Beverage

Cups

Food wraps

Trays

Plates

Fast Food Extras

Bags

Containers

Packaging

Paper (when not paper beverage container, cup, wrap, tray/plate, or paper bags)

Tobacco

Small Item Survey

One area of the survey site will be closely examined for ALL visible litter, including items under 1 inch (bottle-cap size).

Do this on 1/10 of survey area (30 ft). Select one end to start from, then use the same area on all subsequent surveys. Mark it on the map. In this area collect every cigarette butt, piece of plastic, glass, or metal, etc. There is a separate section at the end of the survey form to record these small items. Any large items found in this area should be recorded in their own general (large) category.

Items of <1" diameter can be collected from the rest of the survey area but should be clearly recorded separately, since they represent a more haphazard collection of small items than in the designated area.