

A photograph of a street scene at night. In the foreground, a dark-colored trash bin stands on a cobblestone sidewalk. In the background, a building with a sign that says "OPEN ALL HOURS" is visible. The sign is illuminated with a bright blue neon glow. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the neon sign.

**OPEN**  
ALL HOURS

# **REDUCING LITTER CAUSED BY 'FOOD ON THE GO'**

**A Voluntary Code  
of Practice for Local  
Partnerships**





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# REDUCING LITTER CAUSED BY 'FOOD ON THE GO'

## A Voluntary Code of Practice

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# INTRODUCTION – LITTER FROM ‘FOOD ON THE GO’

## What is the problem?

As people live busier lives, work later and eat on the move more frequently, they also drop more litter. In the last two years alone there has been a massive increase in all types of food related litter on our streets. Most people find this one of the most offensive types of litter and are becoming increasingly concerned about the problems it causes, especially the growth in the rat population.

According to the annual litter survey that ENCAMS (which runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign) carries out for Government, litter from traditional ‘fast food’ – chips, burgers and kebabs – is now found in 50% more areas than it was two years ago. The amount of food packaging from snacks and confectionery is even worse and is growing by over 10% a year.

## What can we do about it?

Nobody likes to live in a rundown neighbourhood and nobody likes to work or visit shops in a dirty, neglected area. As part of Government’s commitment to cleaner, safer and greener communities it has developed a Voluntary Code of Practice for businesses that sell food, outlining what they can do to help reduce the amount of food related litter.

There are three main parties responsible for food related litter in this country: the businesses who sell the food and its packaging, the public who drop it and the local authorities and other agencies that pick it up.



# THE VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE

## FOR REDUCING LITTER FROM ‘FOOD ON THE GO’

The Voluntary Code of Practice sets out a series of recommendations for all businesses selling food for immediate consumption – drinks, sandwiches, snacks, burgers, chips and their packaging – to reduce litter. The Code also promotes joint cooperation and community engagement which is key to improving local communities.

The Code has been researched carefully with businesses, the public and other agencies including local authorities. As a result, businesses have been categorised to reflect fairly the impact of the products they sell on the litter problem, and their ability to clean them up. Different recommendations for action have been given to each category. The categories are as follows:

### Types of operators selling ‘food on the go’

<b>Primary Outlet</b>	An outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food on the go to customers, e.g. pizzeria, chip shop, burger bar.
Small outlets	These may be single premises or a couple of nuclear units often family owned, e.g. local pizzerias, kebab shops.
Medium outlets	Chains or franchise operations of ranging size, usually regionally based, such as sandwich shops, burger and fried chicken franchises.
Large outlets	National and international franchises otherwise known as Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). Also includes major multi-million pound sub-regional franchises where every outlet in the same franchise is owned by one business (or individual)
Drive thrus	Dominated by international franchises of burger and chicken providers, but there are also smaller local and regional drive thrus.
Mobile outlets	These include potato vans, hot dog vans, ice cream vans and roadside vehicles.
<b>Secondary Outlet</b>	An outlet that sells food for immediate consumption but this is not its sole or main function, e.g. newsagents, supermarkets, petrol stations and any store selling sandwiches.
Small outlets	May be single premises or a couple of nuclear units, often family-owned, e.g. newsagents, corner shops.
Medium outlets	These are outlets of varying size, characterised by local/regional marketing/franchise/packaging operations such as a local small shops chain.
Large outlets	These include large high street retailers and supermarkets, primarily those that sell takeaway sandwiches.

## The Voluntary Code – how does it fit with the existing laws on litter and waste?

This Code is just one of the ways that Government is tackling problems with litter and waste. It is a voluntary agreement that does not impose any additional requirements on businesses beyond those that currently exist. However, local authorities already have powers to require businesses and others to clear up litter in certain circumstances and they may use the Code to help them exercise these powers.

**Current Legal Position:** There are already laws in place to deal with litter and waste. People can be fined £50 for dropping litter and local authorities (amongst others) have a duty to keep their land clear of litter and refuse. Businesses are required by law to control their waste, store it properly and have a waste contract with a legally authorised company. Businesses can be required to clear litter from the front of their premises within a specified time if they are shown to be contributing significantly to the litter problem locally. Government is working on further initiatives to make individuals more responsible, to increase education and to give local authorities more powers to improve local environmental quality.

For more information on the laws on litter and waste and how they relate to businesses, you can request a copy of “Your Business and the Law: A guide for Businesses” which is available free from [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639.

This brochure is a short version of the Voluntary Code of Practice for Reducing Litter Caused by Food on the Go, designed for small, medium and large sized businesses. If you would like a full version, which contains more details, visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/litter/index.htm> or [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639.



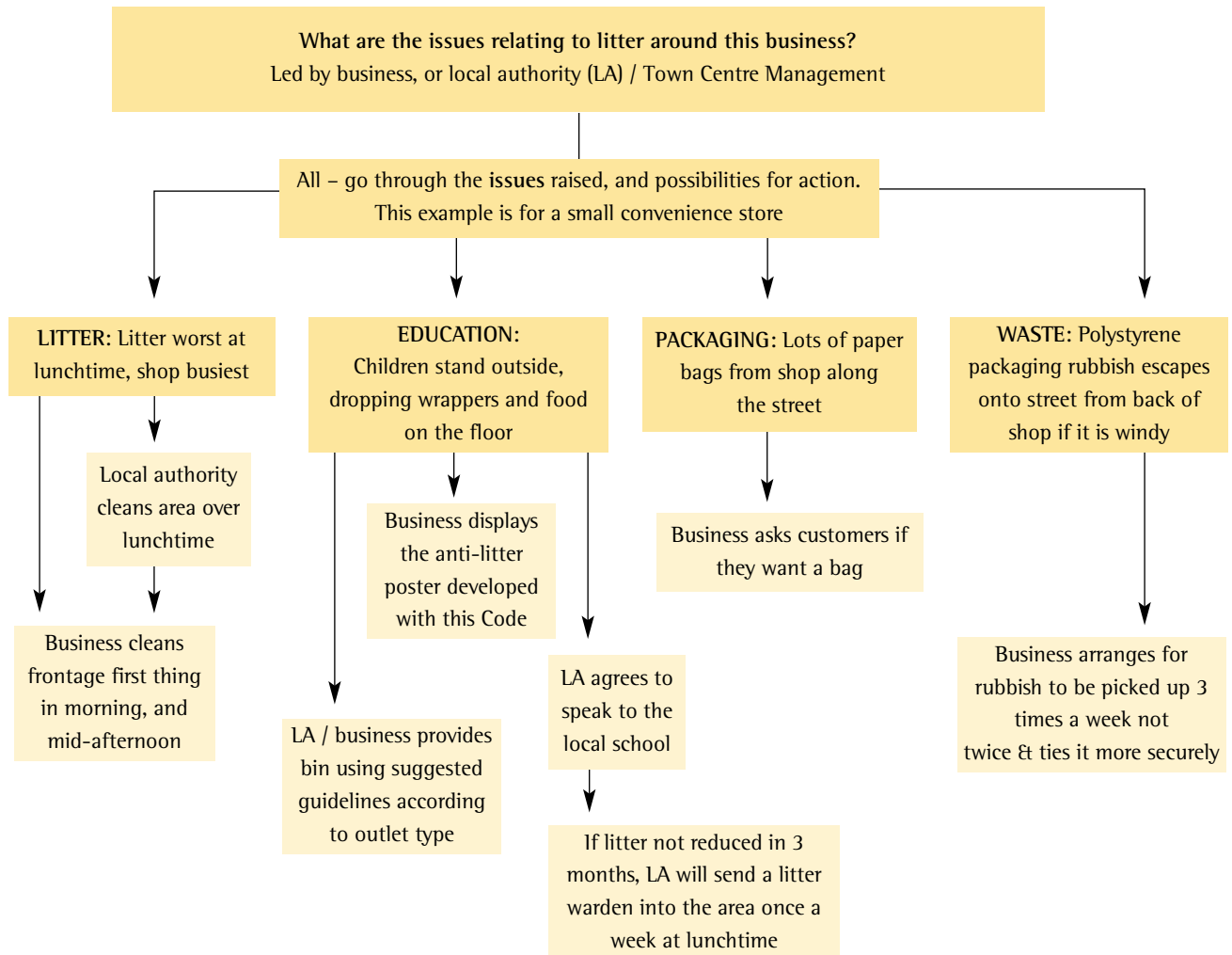
*“Maintaining a clean and tidy premises is central to customer loyalty”*

British Retail Consortium (consultation response)

# HOW DOES THE VOLUNTARY CODE WORK?

The Code is designed to help those responsible for food related litter so they can create local solutions to local problems. The aim is that businesses, together with local authorities and/or Town Centre Managers, work together to look at the particular issues surrounding food related litter and decide how to tackle them, within the framework of actions set out in the Voluntary Code. It doesn't matter who starts the process – it could come from any party.

This is an example of how a business and supporting agencies might approach the agreement:



## STEP 1 – What are the particular issues causing litter from your products or around your business?

The first stage is to establish when, where, how and as a result of whom the litter arises, to help all parties work together to find a solution.

The following questions may be useful to consider:

- At what times is the shop most busy?
- At what times are the largest volumes of your food and packaging littered in the area around your premises?
- What does this litter consist of? (e.g. different packaging types, food, drink, cigarette ends)
- Who is doing the littering? (May vary by time of day)
- In which locations is the most litter deposited?
- How far does the litter go?
- Do you think you need more litter bins? If so, where could they be placed?
- Do you have staining around your business? Where and when do the problems occur?
- What do you currently do to reduce litter? (e.g. clean front and/or rear of shop, windows, display anti-litter posters, corporate guidelines or policies, reduce packaging?)
- Who is your waste collection contract with? (Please provide name, address and telephone number)
- Any other issues you would like to note – e.g. problems with vandalism, graffiti, noise

## STEP 2: The solutions

Once the particular issues, timings and some of the causes have been established, solutions can be developed.

Following two years of research amongst businesses and other agencies the Code sets out recommendations on actions that can be taken. The actions reflect a business' impact on the local community and its ability to take action without affecting normal business operations. Government feels very strongly that businesses should regard these as a full list and strive to undertake all where relevant.

The recommendations should be set out in the form of an agreement between the business and other public/private bodies (such as local authorities, Town Centre Managers, Network Rail and other transport operators). The forms at the end of this brochure contain spaces where you can insert the actions that all parties have agreed to take, together with a note of the maximum requirements for each business category.

More information is available in the full Code, from [www.defra.gov.uk/localenv](http://www.defra.gov.uk/localenv) , [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639 or contact your local authority.



The main ways you can make a difference are:

1. Through campaigning to change people's attitudes and get them to stop dropping litter in the first place



As part of this Voluntary Code ENCAMS has produced an anti-litter poster which has been designed, to change the behaviour of the type of person that drops this kind of litter. It also promotes the fact that you are playing your part. You can order a copy of this poster from [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639.

2. Reducing the amount of packaging you give away so that there is less litter to drop in the first place

Do people always need a bag? Some local newsagents sell sandwiches to schoolchildren at lunchtime without any packaging at all – they just put it in their hand. Sometimes, giving a bag helps to contain all of the different bits of litter and stop them blowing around in the wind.

3. Managing your own waste properly, making sure that it is stored correctly, put out at the right times, and that you have a contract with a Registered Waste Carrier

This is a legal obligation on businesses under s.34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. If you do not have a waste contract you are breaking the law and could be prosecuted. If you need more information on this, ENCAMS produces a leaflet for businesses "Your Rubbish and the Law: A Guide for Businesses". Download from [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639 for a free copy.

4. Picking up the litter around your premises

74% of businesses said that they already pick up litter around their businesses and felt that it was their responsibility. The Voluntary Code gives guidelines on how far outside their premises businesses ought to keep litter-free, depending on the size of the business – see the following tables. Supporting agencies also have a role to play in reducing litter from food on the go. For more details see the complete Code of Practice at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/litter/index.htm> or [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) or phone 01942 612639

The following tables are designed to provide space for businesses and supporting agencies to agree on the best courses of action, and are designed for different business types. This leaflet only shows the recommendations for mobile, small and medium operators. The full list is available in the full Voluntary Code.

## Code of Practice – Primary or Secondary Small Fixed Outlets

- Primary Outlet:** An outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food on the go to customers, e.g. pizzeria, chip shop, burger bar.
- Secondary Outlet:** An outlet that sells food for immediate consumption but this is not its sole or main function, e.g. newsagents, supermarkets, petrol stations and any store selling sandwiches.
- Small Outlets:** These may be single premises or a couple of nuclear units often family owned, e.g. local pizzerias, kebab shops.

### Agreed Actions:

	Business	Supporting Agency/Agencies
Changing Public Behaviour		
Packaging		
Waste		
Litter		

### Recommendations:

For more details see relevant sections in the full document  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/litter/index.htm> or [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org)

#### Changing Public Behaviour

- Anti-litter messages inside stores, on exits and bins where appropriate

#### Packaging

- Review your packaging – can it be reduced?
- Ask customers if they want a bag

#### Waste

- Comply with the Duty of Care on Waste Regulations

#### Litter

- Complete a litter management checklist annually
- Clear all litter daily from your shop frontage to the edge of the pavement
- Litter bins – if you and the local authority agree that one is needed, ask the local authority to provide one litter bin for the outside of your premises

Signed  
(on behalf of Business)

Date

Signed  
(on behalf of Supporting Agency/Agencies)

Date

## Code of Practice – Primary or Secondary Medium fixed Outlets

- Primary Outlet:** An outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food on the go to customers, e.g. pizzeria, chip shop, burger bar.
- Secondary Outlet:** An outlet that sells food for immediate consumption but this is not its sole or main function, e.g. newsagents, supermarkets, petrol stations and any store selling sandwiches.
- Medium Outlets:** Chains or franchise operations of ranging size, usually regionally based, such as sandwich shops, burger and fried chicken providers.

### Agreed Actions:

	Business	Supporting Agency/Agencies
Changing Public Behaviour		
Packaging		
Waste		
Litter		

### Recommendations:

#### Changing Public Behaviour

- Anti-litter messages inside stores, on exits and bins where appropriate

#### Packaging

- Review your packaging – can it be reduced?
- Ask customers if they want a bag
- If you print packaging, display the (minimum size) Tidyman symbol

#### Waste

- Comply with the Duty of Care on Waste Regulations

#### Litter

- Complete a litter management checklist annually
- In agreement with supporting agencies, carry out and record an appropriate number of daily litter patrols for all litter on your frontage to the end of the pavement or for two metres in a pedestrianised area
- Share litter patrol charts with local authority or supporting agency
- Negotiate the provision of litter bins with local authorities if appropriate

Signed

(on behalf of Business)

Date

Signed

(on behalf of Supporting Agency/Agencies)

Date

## Code of Practice – Primary Outlets (Mobile Outlets)

**Primary Outlet:** An outlet whose main or sole purpose is to sell food on the go to customers, e.g. pizzeria, chip shop, burger bar.

**Mobile Outlet:** These include potato vans, hot dog vans, ice cream vans and roadside vehicles.

### Agreed Actions:

	Business	Supporting Agency/Agencies
Changing Public Behaviour		
Packaging		
Waste		
Litter		

### Recommendations:

#### Changing Public Behaviour

- Display anti-litter messages at point of sale and/or on your vehicle

#### Packaging

- Review your packaging – can it be reduced?
- Ask customers if they want a bag

#### Waste

- Comply with the Duty of Care on Waste Regulations

#### Litter

- Complete a litter management checklist annually
- Carry out a litter walk for five metres around your mobile vending unit twice a day, the last pick prior to departure
- Litter bins - if it is agreed that a litter bin is needed, ask the local authority to provide one for the outside of your premises

Signed  
(on behalf of Business)

Date

Signed  
(on behalf of Supporting Agency/Agencies)

Date



**Keep Britain Tidy**



Supported by Defra  
(Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)



Printed on Revive Silk,  
made from 75% recycled fibres.



[www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org)

ENC/564/04