



MEDIA RELEASE

Whose waste is it anyway?

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With the illegal dumping of waste becoming more and more prevalent over the past four years, we are in danger of literally becoming the southern 'tip' of Africa. What is it that is keeping us from taking ownership of our environment? Illegal dumping is not the answer. People often complain that they pay rates and should be allowed to dispose of extra waste that they accumulate at landfill sites at no cost. The reason for this is that people need to understand that the waste levy they pay as part of their rates is for the weekly removal of their household waste; it does not include garage clean ups that can have waste material that includes hazardous substances, such as used batteries, fluorescent tubes, paints, oil etc.

What is illegal dumping? It means not taking your unwanted waste to a licensed engineered landfill site – and paying for the professional disposal thereof, but “tipping” (dumping) it in an unsightly manner in urban areas of open land.

Many new levies and tariffs have been introduced by landfill and dumping agencies over the past few months to cover the increasing costs of managing the immense waste problem facing our country. It must be noted that some municipalities e.g. eThekweni Metro allow residents to dispose of their first 100 kgs of waste free when visiting the metro landfill sites.

Again, illegal dumping is not the answer, apart from the unsightliness of the dumped waste; you face major fines for not disposing of your waste correctly. It is economics of scale, if everyone starts taking responsibility for their own waste, and show sensitivity towards the environment, it will be a win-win situation for everyone.

Our city managers have had to devise productive plans and strategies for huge amounts of discarded rubbish.

Vincent Charnley, President of the Institute of Waste Management of South Africa (IWMSA) insists that there should be a joint effort from all parties who manage waste in their different capacities. “The messages should be loud, clear and simple. Illegal dumping affects everyone. It’s hazardous, costly, unsightly and generally a sad indictment on our society.” A great advocate of education, he adds “Information must be effectively relayed to the consumer regarding the do’s and don’ts of dumping all kinds of waste, as well as locations and tariffs.” He continues to say “It’s up to the consumer to play their part as well, and people should, in turn, accept responsibility for their choices. We must all learn to make more educated decisions about how to dispose of waste. This applies both to commercial entities and private individuals.”

It seems we all need a change of mindset if illegal dumping is to be curtailed and this is what IWMSA is intent on achieving. Report illegal dumping if you see it happening to your closest municipality. Get onto the Internet – you’ll find all the information you need there. It’s time to be a little more proactive and practical. Let’s see the bigger picture, own the problem and do our part to educate ourselves and make an effort. Not for accolades, or a pat on the back, but simply because it’s right.

For more information contact the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa at: 011 675 3464, or visit www.iwmsa.co.za.

Media contact:

Regine le Roux

Mobile: 083 302 1528

Tel: 011 317 3861

e-Mail: regine@reputationmatters.co.za

on behalf of the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa