

Our ref:  
Your ref:

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10 April 2013

Dear Ms McGeachie

### LITTER ON COUNTRY ROADS AND MOTORWAYS

Thank you for your letter concerning litter on country roads and motorways.

The Secretary of State for Transport has a responsibility under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect roadside litter on motorways. This duty is carried out on the behalf of the Secretary of State by the Highways Agency, which employs contractors for the routine maintenance of its road network including the clearing of roadside litter from England's motorways. In clearing litter the contractors are required to work to the 'Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006' set by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Roadside litter collection on all other roads, including Trunk roads, is the responsibility of local authorities.

The Highways Agency shares your frustration with regard to the amount of litter deposited on or at the side of motorways and trunk roads. Roadside litter is not only unsightly, but can be a threat to the environment and litter picking diverts resources away from other essential road maintenance activities. Furthermore it is estimated that during 2011 the Agency removed around 240,000 sacks of litter from the motorways

To help tackle this issue the Highways Agency periodically promotes its national litter campaign – 'Bag it. Bin it!' - through a variety of communication channels. This includes using print and broadcast media, via online and digital media such as Twitter and the Agency's website, the use of Information Points at motorway service areas, and through the use of road side electronic variable messaging signs.

The campaign messages urge all road users to take responsibility and carry a bag for litter in their vehicle, and to dispose of this responsibly when they take a break or reach their destination.

The Agency also works in liaison with Defra Keep Britain Tidy and CPRE to raise public awareness of the dangers, and costs associated with litter and co-ordinates its activity under the national 'Love Where You Live' campaign. We also work with local authorities

RC Letter Litter\_09/04/2013

Page 1 of 2



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to minimise litter and fly tipping and have had a number of successful prosecutions for fly tipping offences.

At a regional level there are a number of ways in which the Highways Agency continues to work to minimise the amount of litter on our motorways. Some examples include;

- liaison with both the Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association to encourage haulage operators to properly cover open skips and trailers;
- co-ordination with local authorities to provide opportunities for them to collect litter on trunk roads within Highways Agency roadworks; and
- teaming up with the HGV industry regulator in the North West to encourage commercial vehicle operators to ensure their vehicles do not spill litter or debris on to the roads.

You may also wish to note that we encourage our contractors to conduct 'holistic' maintenance activities, such as litter picking whilst managing grass land, shrub and trees when they are undertaking routine maintenance work.

I hope this reassures you that the Agency takes the problem of litter seriously and is working hard to keep our network clean and free of litter and debris.

Yours sincerely



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