



Press release  
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## **IBAL hits out at lack of litter fines**

Just 6 fines issued per week among 91 local authority areas

Irish Business Against Litter has hit out at local authorities across the country for their neglect of the litter problem on foot of the most recent figures issued by the department of the Environment. Official records show that an average of 6 fines per week were issued among the 91 local authority areas during the six-month period.

Dr. Tom Cavanagh chairman of IBAL commented, "This is a very disappointing result. With an average of only 2.6 fines paid per week, the enforcement of anti-litter laws is clearly not strict enough. The government must tackle the litter problem in earnest if we are to see real results. Local community groups cannot continue to make up for the lack of initiative of the government. The litter problem is escalating and IBAL wants to see the stringent enforcement of anti-litter laws in order to curb it."

The final surveys for the All-Ireland Anti-Litter League will take place shortly, with the results being issued in December. Things are really hotting up amongst competitors as 29 towns vie for the All-Ireland Anti-Litter League trophy and the accolade of the cleanest town in Ireland. Some towns have shown significant improvements over the course of 2002, however, the majority continue to be "heavily" or "very heavily littered." "The lack of litter wardens and low level of fines issued does not discourage littering. When penalties are enforced, people will listen."

According to the Department of the Environment figures, 47 out of 91 local authority areas were still without any full-time litter warden in the latter half of 2001. In some areas, no fines were issued during that period. "Litter wardens should be empowered to issue on-the-spot fines to those who break the laws. If there are no wardens, who will issue the fines?"

Earlier this year the Department of the Environment and Local Government was presented with the Second Annual Report under the National Litter Pollution Monitoring System to enable local authorities to assess litter levels in their jurisdictions. The reports reveal the main litter-types found around the country:

1. Cigarette-related 67% (incl. boxes, wrappers, butts, matches and matchboxes and lighters)
2. Packaging 16% (incl. plastic, which made up 50% of this)
3. Food 11% (incl. chewing gum, which made up 70% of this)
4. Paper 4%. (incl. bank slips, receipts, flyers, and newspapers.)

The report forms part of a national plan to tackle litter. These results are consistent with what surveyors found in the course of the All-Ireland Anti-Litter League. "We have always known that cigarette-related litter is one of the primary sources of litter on our streets and yet "butt bins" are only a relatively new acquisition in the local authority areas, and very few have put them in place."

These results are announced as the new pilot community warden scheme runs into its 8th month. The programme, being run in the five local authority areas of Galway city, Galway county, Wexford county, Leitrim county and Naas town, will continue until the end of 2004. The five areas were chosen to represent five different types of community across the country. Litter is among the problems being tackled by the scheme. The chosen areas are already seeing significant improvements since

the programme was initiated in February.

“The new scheme is a commendable idea,” commented Dr. Cavanagh. “If this programme is successful, it could pave the way for a new government approach to tackling the litter problem. Such a scheme, if properly implemented, could dramatically increase the number of fines issued in each local authority area thereby improving Ireland’s environment and our status as an exciting location for Foreign Direct Investment.”