

2025
North Carolina Interagency Report
Litter Cleanup, Education-Prevention
and Enforcement

2025 Calendar Year

February 28, 2026

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Litter Report 2025

This report is prepared pursuant to Session Law 2006-79, Section 15 G.S. 147-12 (b) and provides information describing North Carolina's 2025 litter prevention initiatives.

The state's 2025 litter prevention campaign had three components:

- Litter cleanup
- Education - prevention
- Enforcement

Information contained in this report is for the calendar year 2025 unless otherwise noted. This interagency report was prepared by North Carolina Department of Transportation with multiple agencies providing yearly reporting information. A list of these agencies and litter report contacts is provided in Appendix A of this report.

Executive Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) total state highway system is comprised of approximately 80,000 road miles.

In 2025, NCDOT enhanced its public education program related to anti-litter messages with new social media posts and press releases. NCDOT developed 60 PSAs to help educate and encourage North Carolina residents to not litter, secure their loads and work together to keep the state clean.

In 2025, NCDOT spent \$22,854,472 removing litter from state routes. The total expenditure decreased by \$2,946,871 compared to 2024.

NCDOT Contract Forces picked up 8,741,475 pounds of litter in 2025. The Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program continued to make a difference as the volunteers reported picking up 1,020,480 pounds of litter during 2025. The Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH) program recovered 891,195 pounds of litter. NCDOT Forces picked up 1,117,740 pounds of litter. Other volunteers who picked up litter on North Carolina roadways reported picking up 125,310 pounds in 2025. Efforts from all programs totaled 11,896,200 pounds of litter being collected.

Statewide litter prevention continued to be collectively supported by NCDOT, its Litter Management Programs, North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. NCDOT promoted litter prevention by supplying information through North Carolina Welcome Centers and social media sites, as well as providing litter prevention promotional items to numerous local organizations and schools.

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts provides a 2025 recap of statewide littering charges by offense code and by law enforcement agency. There were 3,108 charges and 722 convictions in 2025. As in previous years, the Conference of Chief District Court Judges continued to provide an alternative to first-time offenders charged with littering of less than 15 pounds. On execution of written waiver of appearance and trial, and plea of guilty/responsible, an offender may have the court appearance waived. The fine for intentional littering is \$500 plus costs and \$50 plus costs for unintentional littering. This was adopted by the Conference of Chief District Court Judges on October 15, 2025, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 7A-148, and applies to any new offenses on or after December 1, 2025.

1.0 Statewide Roadside Litter Cleanup

1.1 North Carolina Department of Transportation

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), hereinafter also referred to as the department, maintains a Litter Management program to address litter along State roadways. In 2025, NCDOT coordinated and implemented its various litter cleanup programs including: Adopt-A-Highway (AAH), Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH), Contract Litter Removal (CLR) contracts, NCDOT Forces litter and bag removal. Additionally, the bi-annual Litter Sweeps were held in April and September 2025.

NCDOT Roadside Environmental has designated Litter Managers in each of the fourteen NCDOT highway divisions to coordinate efforts for litter abatement programs.

NCDOT's Litter Management database has continued to make reporting litter pickups easier and accessible for all groups.

NCDOT's Litter Sweeps are typically held in the last two weeks of April and September. The department provides volunteers with gloves, safety vests and bags for use in roadside litter removal. The department also provides additional manpower during Litter Sweeps for litter cleanup, removal and immediate disposal of bags filled with trash from NCDOT roadsides.

NCDOT continues to build its relationships with statewide nonprofit organizations to promote litter prevention for safe, environmentally sound, and aesthetic roadways. The nonprofit organizations involved include Keep North Carolina Beautiful, Inc. (KNCB) and the North Carolina Solid Waste Enforcement Officers Association. The department also worked with the volunteers in the AAH program and other citizen volunteers and industries as well as Community Service Work Program (CSWP); State Highway Patrol; and local governments. In addition, the department's private, public, partnership initiative, the SAH Program continued to expand. This program provides a means for businesses, individuals and other organizations to sponsor roadside litter removal.

1.2 NCDOT Adopt-A-Highway Program

NCDOT's Litter Management office administers the department's AAH program. This statewide program is a mutually beneficial partnership between the department and community volunteers. The volunteers participating in the AAH program include businesses, individuals, schools, civic organizations and professional, religious and social groups. Participants agree to support local roadside litter removal by adopting a two-mile stretch of roadway and volunteering their time to pick up the litter at least four times a year. The AAH agreement is for a four-year period. In return, the department provides gloves, safety vests and bags for cleanups and recognizes each group by installing a sign with the group's name at each end of its adopted roadway. Upon reaching 10-, 15-, 20-, 25-, 30-and 35-year milestones, recognition awards along with anniversary stars to be placed on their signs, are given to the volunteer groups. Some AAH volunteer groups were also recognized by the department via social media in 2025.

In 2025, the AAH Program cost \$658,435. Program costs include administration, sign installation, provisions, etc. There were 7,223 man-hours charged to this program.

The State Litter Management Program Outreach Coordinator utilized the assistance of Division Litter Managers and various program coordinators and co-coordinators throughout all 14 highway divisions. The coordinators manage the adoption and signage approval processes and other program administrative responsibilities within their assigned counties.

At the close of 2025, there were 9,619 road miles adopted by 5,002 AAH groups. The volunteer cleanup efforts of the AAH program saved the state's taxpayers millions of dollars. Volunteers reported working 111,849 hours and picked up 1,020,480 pounds of litter.

Other Volunteers, who do not have an AAH contract, reported picking up 125,310 lbs. during 2025.

1.3 NCDOT Sponsor-A-Highway Program

NCDOT's Sponsor-A-Highway (SAH) Program was initiated in 2011 as a public-private partnership. Beginning as a pilot, it covered 22 counties. In 2015, the program expanded statewide covering all NC interstate highways. In 2017, the program stretched beyond interstates. The SAH Program provides a means for businesses, individuals and other organizations to participate in beautifying and environmentally enhancing North Carolina roadways while having the advantage of advertising their company name at the same time. The first individual to sponsor a highway segment was in 2022 and in memoriam of someone.

This public private partnership is pursuant to North Carolina Section 3. General Statute 136-28.1 (I). Per the terms of the program, a service provider's responsibilities include marketing, securing sponsors, sign installation and maintenance, and litter removal and disposal using their own crews. The sponsors, who hire the department's approved service providers for highway litter removal, receive a logo acknowledgement panel that's attached to the SAH program sign. The signs are installed at the beginning of each sponsored one-mile segment.

There are two service providers who have contracted with NCDOT. They are Adopt-A-Highway Maintenance Corporation of Costa Mesa, California, and Adopt-A-Highway Litter Removal Service of America, Inc., of Encinitas, California. Both companies have a long history in the roadside litter removal industry, and use their own staff, cleaning supplies, and vehicles. Their employees are trained to work on interstates and other high traffic volume roadways.

The cost for sponsors participating in the program is negotiated solely between sponsor and service provider. There is no money exchanged between NCDOT and the service providers. At the close of 2025, SAH service providers maintained 1395 sponsored one-mile segments. Some sponsors have multiple segments. Each segment is cleaned monthly. SAH service providers recovered 891,195 pounds of litter from NC roadways in 2025.

1.4 NCDOT Contract Litter Management

At the close of 2025, a total of 8,741,475 pounds of litter was collected over a span of 172,104 shoulder miles by litter and mowing/litter combined contracts at a cost of \$18,293,107. NCDOT Roadside Environmental Litter Managers in NCDOT's 14 highway divisions oversee multiple litter and debris removal contracts that support litter collection efforts statewide. In 2025, contractors contributed to NCDOT's Contract Litter Removal (CLR) efforts. The contract types include, but are not limited to, litter only, mowing & litter removal, corridor only, on-call and large debris removal contracts. The success of NCDOT Contract Forces continues to be dependent on the outstanding efforts put forth by NCDOT Roadside Environmental staff and the department's litter removal contractor partners.

1.5 NCDPS Road Squads/ Litter Crews

Per the Appropriations Act of 2017 (SB 257), after the issuance of a request for information (RFI) and receipt of bids by the Department of Transportation for litter pickup on State highways and roads, the Department of Transportation shall first offer the contract to the Division of Adult Correction upon the same terms and conditions as the most favorable bid received by the Department of Transportation from a suitable contractor. The Division of Adult Correction shall have 30 days to accept or decline the offered contract.

In 2022, Correction Enterprises began to pick up litter for the NC Department of Transportation in Division 8. The two Departments continue to look for other opportunities for DPS crews to assist in litter pick up across the state.

The Minimum Custody Road Squads are utilized within DOT crews at the discretion of County Maintenance Engineers. In 2025, NCDOT used Minimum Custody Road Squads for a total of 25,284 man-days at a cost of \$1/day. Minimum Custody Road Squads picked up litter along 967 road miles for a total cost of \$64.00.

1.6 Community Service Work Program – Litter Control Efforts

The Community Service Work Program (CSWP) was established as a grant funded initiative in the early 1980's. During 1983, it was established as a program through the Safe Roads Act. Effective January 2002, CSWP was transferred from the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety to the Department of Correction, Division of Community Corrections through legislative action.

As of January 1, 2012, CSWP is now a part of the NC Department of Adult Corrections, Division of Community Supervision. CSWP is a separate program from the inmate work crews. Offenders in CSWP are not incarcerated, but are ordered to perform community service work hours, as a condition of either supervised or unsupervised probation, depending upon the criminal offense committed and the offender's history.

Community Supervision judicial services coordinators place offenders at government or non-profit agencies, within the local community, to perform work needed by the agency. During 2025, there were more than 1,200 agencies statewide which participated in the CSWP by contracting as worksites for placement of community service offenders.

Offenders perform a variety of work, including general labor, skilled labor, clerical labor, professional labor and litter removal. The value of the various types of labor is calculated upon the North Carolina Department of Labor categories and relative market value minimum payment rates. Many of these agencies focus on litter control regularly and participate in the NCDOT Litter Sweeps. Table 1-1 below summarizes CSWP litter pickup results by year.

Table 1-1 CSWP Litter Pickup Results by Year

Year	Pounds Collected	Number of Hours Worked
2025	615,025	34,168
2024	686,919	38,162
2023	713,106	39,617
2022	707,191	39,288
2021	692,395	38,466

1.7 NCDOT Litter Removal Disbursements Summary

Table 1-2 below summarizes NCDOT disbursements for litter removal by year.

Table 1-2. NCDOT Disbursements for Litter Removal by Year

Program	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
NCDOT Employees	\$3,902,866	\$4,785,632	\$5,326,668	\$5,008,896	\$6,604,912
AAH	\$658,435	\$704,814	\$595,113	\$538,953	\$619,241
NCDPS (Minimum Custody Road Squads)	\$64	\$173	\$442	\$452	\$82
Contract Litter Removal	\$18,293,107	\$20,310,723	\$19,334,950	\$16,748,565	\$11,839,580
Total Disbursement by Year:	\$22,854,472	\$25,801,343	\$25,257,173	\$22,296,866	\$19,063,815

1.8 North Carolina Department of Natural & Cultural Resources

1.8.1 Division of Parks and Recreation

The Division of Parks and Recreation hosts litter cleanup events and educational programs to demonstrate the importance of litter abatement and recycling. The division reported 1,143 bags of litter collected in 2025.

1.9 Other Statewide Litter Cleanups

1.9.1 Keep America Beautiful Affiliates

Affiliates of Keep America Beautiful participate throughout NC to help beautify the environment. Collecting litter is one of the many ways they participate. Listed below are agencies who reported efforts for 2025.

- **Keep Lincoln County Beautiful** collected 987 bags from roadside cleanups with over 685 hours. Waterway cleanups resulted in 8 bags being collected with over 87 hours. Curbside, medians, and storm drain clean-ups resulted in working over 296 hours and collected 608 bags.
- **Keep Gastonia Beautiful (KGB)** River sweep cleanups resulted in a total of 952 pounds of debris collected by 22 volunteers. Adopt-A-Street efforts added 4,809 pounds collected by 596 volunteers, for a total of 5,761 pounds in 2025. KGB also used a paid contractor for pickups prior to mowing and for spot cleanups. The contractor collected 2,658 bags of trash.
- **City of High Point/Keep High Point Beautiful** reported having a total of 16,993 pounds of litter and debris collected by 921 volunteers. Various programs included, the Winter Wipeout, Greatest American Cleanup, Adopt-A-Street, and the High Point Big Sweep. A few pictures were provided.



- **Keep America Beautiful of Nash & Edgecombe Counties** had two river cleanups with 40 volunteers who worked 320 hours and collected 1,904 pounds of litter. The litter cleanups resulted in 323 volunteers working 741 hours and collected a total of 9,300 pounds of litter in 2025.

- **Keep Ashe Beautiful** had 660 volunteers who worked 2,448 hours and collected and disposed of 86,629 pounds of litter. They recycled 3,260 pounds of aluminum cans, cardboard and plastics and 364 tires. Tons of storm debris due to Hurricane Helene could not be quantified. A few pictures were provided as cleanup continues.



- **Keep McDowell Beautiful** had 210 volunteers complete 1,784 hours of service removing 45,000 pounds of trash and hurricane debris which valued at \$62,065 in 2025. Keep McDowell Beautiful hosted the spring Lake James Clean Up on the first Saturday of May 2025. Twenty-five volunteers completed 4 hours of service for a total of 100 community service hours and a value of \$3,479. A total of 1,600 pounds of litter were removed from Lake James during the event.

2.0 Anti-Litter Education/Prevention

2.1 Department of Environmental Quality

2.1.1 Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS)

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's (NCDEQ) Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) conducts two campaigns designed to reinforce recycling behavior and to encourage North Carolinians to properly manage their discarded materials at home, work, school and on-the-go. These programs are described briefly below:

Recycle Guys

The Recycle Guys campaign is intended to reach elementary and middle school children with videos, activity books, stickers, pencils, temporary tattoos and other promotional materials to encourage recycling behavior. Of the most used Recycle Guys videos, one specifically addressing litter (developed through a partnership with DOT) is consistently among the highest accessed links on the www.recycleguys.org website.

Recycle Right NC



In 2025, DEACS continued the promotion and use of *Recycle Right NC*, a statewide anti-contamination campaign to increase and improve the quality of recycling. The campaign makes available free outreach toolkits for local governments to customize and distribute to their residents.

Recycle Right NC campaign materials can be accessed through the campaign website: <http://www.recycleright.nc.gov>.

The following provides a description of the activities of DEACS' outreach programs in 2025:

- Coordination with NCDEQ's communications team to promote messaging about proper recycling and litter reduction on NCDEQ Facebook account.
- Assisted promotion of the NCDOT Statewide Litter Sweep opportunities on the [NC DEQ Outreach and Education webpage](#).
- Production of promotion materials distributed directly to the public or through local government recycling programs.
- Training of recycling and solid waste staff and environmental educators on recycling and outreach methods.
- Encouragement of Away-From-Home recycling best practices that include proper trash and recycling bin selection and siting to reduce contamination and litter issues.
- Funding multiple local government grant projects to create and improve infrastructure for away-from-home recycling. Grants will help fund both permanent and event away-from-home recycling access.

Continued Focus on Recycling Education in 2025:

During 2025, DEACS provided graphic support and technical assistance to promote proper recycling with a specific focus on materials that do not belong in the recycling bin. More than 26 local governments and colleges received graphic design support from DEACS in 2025. Specific focus areas include:

- DEACS provides graphic design support for local governments seeking to educate their citizens about proper management of plastic bags, which incorporate the “no plastic bags in recycling” and “return to retail” message.
- DEACS has outreach materials focusing on items that are considered contaminants in the recycling process that should not be placed in recycling bins. Outreach focuses on plastic bags and other common problematic materials: scrap metal; textiles; cords, hoses and strings that could tangle equipment; food waste; and hazardous or medical waste. Messaging includes instruction on proper disposal methods to discourage releases into the environment. DEACS offers posters, signs, and social media toolkits which are all available for any North Carolina government, agency, business, or resident to use.



Other Participation from DEACS on Littering Issues in 2025:

- DEACS provides ongoing support for local chapters of Keep NC Beautiful in their recycling education, away-from-home recycling and litter prevention efforts.
- DEACS collaborates with the NC Solid Waste Enforcement Officers Association (NC SWEOA) to encourage proper materials management and expand recycling programs and community efforts to reduce illegal dumping.
- DEACS collaborates with the NC Marine Debris Symposium to support the organization's annual conference to educate, inform, and provide action on ways to eliminate and reduce marine litter in our environment.
- DEACS presented at the 2025 Solid Waste Association of North America North Carolina Chapter (NC SWANA) Fall conferences in July on statewide recycling data, trends and market prices.
- DEACS organized a meeting of the NC Circular Economy Council (NC CEC), which is made up of organizations and industries involved in the recycling sector, to consider ways to expand and strengthen the state's circular economy infrastructure.
- DEACS functions as the Department of Environmental Quality's customer service center and handled numerous inquiries in 2025 on littering and illegal dumping issues.
- DEACS also oversees the state of North Carolina's recycling efforts, which includes technical assistance to local government recycling programs across the state. Through regular communication in email newsletters, workshops, conference sessions and other settings, DEACS staff provided information to communities about littering issues, opportunities for anti-litter initiatives (such as the tarp program) and the management of illegal dumping.
- DEACS assists in the planning of the annual Carolina Recycling Association Conference, which includes a Keep Carolinas Beautiful Workshop with representatives from litter prevention in North and South Carolina.



2.2 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers often come across numerous littering violations while out on patrols in the performance of their duties. They often set up patrol details targeting littering along waterways, boating and fishing access areas and game lands. Officers address littering violations on NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) managed property, state

highways, state waterways, private property and public property.

2.3 NCDOT – Litter Management Programs

In 2025, NCDOT's Litter Management Programs promoted litter prevention awareness through its website. Each year, Keep Gastonia Beautiful Inc., of Gastonia provides access to their Beautification and Environmental Education Programs. Their entire curriculum is posted on a website which allows an easy download for classroom usage. The link is carried on NCDOT's Litter Management website.

Other items available through NCDOT's Litter Management website include previous litter reports, the litter law, Swat-A-Litterbug, AAH and SAH Program information and Litter Sweep details including related forms. In addition, the cleanup safety videos are provided. A *Litter Activity Book* with litter prevention lessons and activities for students through third grade is available to print. There are also a variety of links to other sites supporting litter prevention.

Anti-litter characters Ava and Oliver encourage actions to create a healthy, clean environment. Linnie, the Litter Bug, is not such a good role model. These characters are displayed on bookmarks, stickers and activity/color sheets. Wooden rulers are available with the message,

"Measure Up! Don't Litter" or "Clean Water Rules" along with NCDOT's Highway Stormwater Program logo. "Do Not Litter" messages are included on promotional items for older students, as well.

NCDOT's Litter Management programs also distributed thousands of car litter bags and other litter prevention handouts, fliers and brochures through Visitor and Welcome Centers, Earth Day events and upon request, to numerous groups. The car litter bag's graphics promote the message that littering is illegal. NCDOT Litter Management's website offers an option to order teacher kits online.

NCDOT Anti-Litter Messages: In 2025 NCDOT continued promoting its public education programs related to Anti-Litter messages with social media posts and press releases. There were 60 posts throughout 2025. These communications help educate and encourage NC residents to not litter, secure their loads, and work together to keep NC clean.

A social media toolkit for the biannual Litter Sweep was also created to help inspire NC residents to post their own Anti-Litter social media content and to encourage them to share their efforts to help keep NC clean.

Adopt-A-Highway Program: The AAH program began its 37th year of operation in 2025. Each year the AAH groups are recognized for their consecutive years of service beginning with 10 years and at years 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35. In 2025, 388 AAH groups, 74 of those being 35-year participants, received awards for their years of volunteer service to the program. Additionally, NCDOT recognized some AAH groups via social media.

Other Litter Prevention Initiatives, Meetings, and Presentations: The Litter Management office continued to promote the use of NCDOT trash bags. The bags are orange on the outside and reversible to blue on the inside for items to be recycled. The bag also has a draw string for safe and easy closure. The bags display the NCDOT logo and a "Do Not Litter" message. These bags are available at NCDOT maintenance yards for volunteers and are available for AAH coordinators to order as needed.

Swat-A-Litterbug Program: This program is administered by the Litter Management office in conjunction with the State Highway Patrol and is intended to educate motorists that littering is illegal. Motorists are utilizing the Swat-A-Litterbug phone application that was developed in 2021 which enables the public to report litterers from their mobile phones. Additionally, motorists observed littering can be reported through the mail, by calling toll free 1-800-331-5864, or using the Swat-A-Litterbug online reporting mechanism on NCDOT's Litter Management website.

Reports include information regarding the offender's vehicle license plate number, time of observance, date, street, city, county and a description of the littering offense observed. The cards include the Swat-A-Litterbug logo.

When reports are received, a letter is mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle reported. The recipient is informed of the littering offense observed, that littering is illegal and that it's a fineable offense upon conviction. There are no citations or warnings issued from these reports. The program is totally anonymous, and no record is kept regarding who submits a report or receives a letter. Approximately 4,385 Swat-A-Litterbug letters were mailed in 2025.

NCDOT receives many complaints via online and by phone stating trash collection trucks are not secured and litter is landing on the roadsides. Litter Management office personnel contact these trash collection companies directly to discuss the complaints and to remind trash collection companies to secure their loads.

Litter License Plate: The NC General Assembly approved the "Litter Prevention" specialty license plate in 2001. Ten dollars of each plate renewed is diverted to the "Litter Prevention Fund" on a quarterly basis. The funds are used to help support statewide anti-litter efforts.

2.4 NCDOT – Litter Related Signage

NCDOT has "Keep NC Clean & Green" litter prevention signs posted along state roadways and at various Rest Areas and Welcome Centers. In addition to the "Keep NC Clean & Green" signs, there are "Littering Is Illegal" signs posted across the state.

3.0 Litter Law Enforcement

3.1 North Carolina State Highway Patrol

In 2025, the NC State Highway Patrol issued 568 citations for littering (G.S. 14-399 and local ordinances) and 502 citations for failing to properly secure a load (G.S. 20-116 (g)), for a total of 1,070 citations. The State Highway Patrol also partnered with NCDOT by participating in the Spring 2025 Litter Sweep and focused on citing motorists that either littered or failed to properly secure and/or cover their loads. Troopers issued 16 litter and 19 load securement citations during the Spring 2025 Litter Sweep. The State Highway Patrol units again partnered with NCDOT by participating in the Fall 2025 Litter Sweep and focused on citing motorists that either littered or failed to properly secure and/or cover their loads. Troopers issued 12 litter and 31 load securement citations during the Fall 2025 Litter Sweep. In addition, various State Highway Patrol units partnered with local businesses around the state in Litter Sweeps on highways, at businesses and at schools using supplies provided by NCDOT. State Highway Patrol citations for past years are shown in the tables below.

Table 3-1. State Highway Patrol Recap of Litter Charges

Year	Number of Litter Charges
2025	568
2024	None reported
2023	357
2022	413
2021	429
2020	None reported
2019	481

Table 3-2. State Highway Patrol Recap of Improper Loading/Covering of Vehicle

Year	Number of Charges
2025	502
2024	None reported
2023	703
2022	629
2021	662
2020	None reported
2019	743

3.2 NCDNCR, Division of Parks and Recreation

DNCR, Division of Parks and Recreation hosts litter clean up events and educational programs to demonstrate the importance of litter abatement and recycling. The Division reported 1,231 bags of litter collected. In addition to these educational measures, state park rangers issued 17 littering citations in 2025.

3.3 NCDEQ, Division of Marine Fisheries – Marine Patrol

From January through December 31, 2025, Marine Patrol officers issued 1 citation and no warning for littering violations. Marine Patrol officers attributed 398 hours to this effort.

Below is a table comparing 2025 to previous years.

Table 3-3. Marine Patrol Citation Recap

Year	Littering Citations	Littering Warnings	Time Spent (hours)
2025	1	0	398
2024	8	1	434
2023	2	2	393
2022	3	1	289
2021	4	0	314
2020	6	2	334
2019	5	5	300
2018	3	0	240

3.4 North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

3.4.1 2025 Littering Report for NC Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Wildlife Enforcement Officers often come across numerous littering violations while out on patrols in the performance of their duties. They often set up patrol details targeting littering along waterways, boating and fishing access areas and game lands. Officers often address littering violations on NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) managed property, state highways, state waterways, private property and public property.

In 2025, under N.C. G.S. 14-399, 308 citations were issued. Possible fines for all citations issued is a total of \$77,000. Possible court cost for all citations issued is a total of \$56,364.

NOTE: Fines and cost are either paid prior to the court date or are assigned by the District Court Judge.

The Land and Water Access Division combined efforts in litter cleanup. The Land and Water Access Division spends countless hours maintaining boating and fishing access areas along with game lands. Within their time maintaining these areas they are picking up litter and emptying trash receptacles that are located on these areas. With 265 boating access areas, 261 public fishing access areas, 637,000 owned state game lands and over 2 million acres of managed game land areas, the NCWRC has installed signage for these areas that deal with littering and how it impacts the environment.

3.5 North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) provides a 2025 recap of statewide littering charges by offense code and by law enforcement agency. There were 3,108 charges and 722 convictions in 2025. Littering charges and convictions are also shown by offense code and by each county in a detailed table at the end of this section.

As in previous years, the Conference of Chief District Court Judges continued to provide an alternative to first-time offenders charged with littering of less than 15 pounds. On execution of written waiver of appearance and trial and plea of guilty/responsible, an offender may have the court appearance waived. The fine for intentional littering is \$250 plus costs and \$50 plus costs for unintentional littering. This was adopted by the Conference of Chief District Court Judges on October 15, 2025, pursuant to N.C. G.S. 7A-148, and applies to any new offenses on or after December 1, 2025.

Calendar year 2025 data on charges and convictions, including the number of charges disposed and the manner of disposition are tracked for the thirteen offenses listed in Table 3-4. Table 3-5 shows the following data provided from the NCAOC's Automated Criminal/Infraction Systems for 2025. The number of charges, convictions and dispositions represents totals from district and superior court. Some of the defendants have other charges in addition to littering offenses. It is possible for a defendant to be charged in one calendar year and convicted in the next. Thus, for any given calendar year, the defendants convicted are not necessarily the same defendants charged in that year.

Table 3-4 List of Offenses

Offense Code	Description	Reference
4425	Improper Loading/Covering of Vehicle	§ 20-116(g)
5370	Commercial Littering	§ 14-399(e)
5371	Littering Hazardous Waste	§ 14-399(e)
5372	Littering not more than 15 pounds	§ 14-399(c)
5373	Littering more than 15 but less than 500 pounds	§ 14-399(d)
5374	Littering more than 500 pounds	§ 14-399(e)
5375	Unintentional Littering not more than 15 Pounds	§ 14-399(c1)
5376	Unintentional Littering more than 15 but less than 500 Pounds	§ 14-399(d1)
5377	Unintentional Littering more than 500 Pounds	§ 14-399(e1)
5378	Second or subsequent offense of littering not more than 15 lbs	§ 14-399(c)
5379	Second or subsequent offense of unintentional littering not more than 15 pounds	§ 14-399(c1)
6248	Litter Game land/Access Area	§ 113-264(a)
8514	Littering Beer/Wine Container	local ordinance

Table 3-5 Statewide Littering Charges and Convictions

The following data are from the NCAOC's Automated Criminal/Infraction System for calendar year 2025. The number of charges, convictions, and dispositions represents totals from district and superior court. Some of the defendants have othr charges in addition to a littering offense. It is possible for a defendant to be charged in one calendar year and convicted in the next. Thus, for any given calendar year, the defendants convicted are not necessarily the same defendants charge in that year.

Calendar Year 2025

Offense Code	Charges	Convictions	CHARGES BY CHARGING AGENCY								Charges Disposed	METHOD OF DISPOSITION				
			ABC	ALE	DMV	Police	Sheriff	SHP	WRC	Other		Guilty Plea	Trial: Guilty	Trial: Not Guilty	Dismiss	Other
4425	840	284	0	0	0	180	46	609	0	5	908	96	0	0	623	189
5353	1452	239	20	31	0	612	185	285	257	62	793	171	3	2	548	69
5355	47	5	0	0	0	18	5	18	5	1	24	5	0	0	19	0
5370	11	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	1	0
5371	36	1	0	0	0	14	19	1	0	2	21	1	0	0	19	1
5372	6	62	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	1035	55	0	1	971	8
5373	5	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	117	11	1	0	105	0
5374	67	3	0	0	0	44	19	0	1	3	39	3	0	0	34	2
5375	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	3	0	0	83	0
5376	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0
5377	10	1	0	0	0	6	0	1	1	2	9	1	0	0	8	0
5378	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	7	1
5379	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5384	86	28	0	1	0	34	5	28	14	4	51	14	0	0	23	14
5385	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
5386	375	53	0	0	0	241	57	13	13	51	195	53	0	2	137	3
5387	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
6248	26	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	67	4	1	0	52	10
8512	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	0	0	0	77	0
8514	141	17	0	0	0	92	14	29	2	4	120	18	0	0	101	1
8555	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	0
8556	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8557	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8558	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8559	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8560	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8561	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	113	0	0	0	113	0
8562	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
8563	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	3108	722	20	32	0	1249	357	984	323	143	3678	435	5	5	2935	298

Appendix A: Contacts

Department	Contact	Email	Phone
NC Department of Transportation Roadside Environmental	Jeremy Goodwin, PE State Roadside Environmental Engineer	jagoodwin@ncdot.gov	919-707-2970
NC Department of Transportation State Maintenance Operations	Jiles Harrell, State Maintenance Engineer	jpharrell@ncdot.gov	919-835-8445
NC Department of Adult Correction, Community Supervision (CSWP)	Leslie Thomas Chief of Support Services	leslie.thomas@dac.nc.gov	919-204-2859
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Division of Parks and Recreation	Laura Kennedy, Chief of Education and Guest Services	laura.kennedy@ncparks.gov	984-354-6976
North Carolina State Highway Patrol	Quintin Staton, Lieutenant	quintin.stanton@ncshp.gov	984-349-6710
NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Marine Fisheries	Michael S. Loeffler, Deputy Director, Division of Marine Fisheries	michael.Loeffler@deq.nc.gov	252-515-5521

NC Administrative Office of the Courts, Research, Policy & Planning Division	Sean Callan, Senior Research & Policy Associate	sean.p.callan@nccourts.org	919-890-1280
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Law Enforcement Divi-	Branden Jones, Captain of Support Services	branden.jones@ncwildlife.org	919-707-0035
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