
2013 Litter Attitudes And Behaviors



Don't
mess with
Texas®

Pre-Campaign Report
April 3, 2013



Summary Of Findings—General Population

- Within the general population, awareness of the *Don't mess with Texas* slogan is very high (98%), with most residents associating it with an anti-litter message and keeping Texas clean.
- A majority (62%) recalled advertising or public service announcements with the slogan in the past year.
 - A larger percentage (81%) reported seeing or hearing the slogan *somewhere* in the past year, with street/highway signs and TV advertising making up a large portion of this recall.
 - Compared to non-litterers, past-month litterers had a higher recall of media and seeing the slogan in other places (e.g., t-shirts, Internet, bumper stickers).
 - Millennials and older adults had similar recall of media/other sources; however, Millennials were more likely to report online and social media sources while older adults had higher recall of the slogan from newspapers and litter bags.
- Past-year recall of *Don't mess with Texas* was much higher than other anti-litter messages and slogans (e.g., “Pitch In”).
- Most Texans believe *Don't mess with Texas* has had a positive impact on reducing litter in Texas. However, less than half indicated it was “very positive.” Reasons for less impact included “still seeing litter,” and a belief that people will not change their behavior.

Summary Of Findings—General Population (cont.)

- About a third of residents admitted to littering in the past month. The most common forms, by a wide margin, were food/organic material and small pieces of paper (e.g., receipts, gum wrappers).
 - Food/organic material was the most common, but considered the *least serious* form of litter, indicating an opportunity for awareness and education to help reduce its frequency as litter.
 - Beer and other cans/bottles, plastic bags/other plastic, and construction debris are considered the most serious forms of litter.

- There are some notable differences by segment. Millennials have a much higher incidence of littering compared to older adults. In general, the incidence of littering skews somewhat toward males, but more heavily toward *Millennials, Hispanics, singles, and households with young children*.
 - In the case of Millennials in particular, being “rushed for time” seems to be a key component of littering.
 - Past-month litterers reported more miles driven per day.
 - While most residents believe littering is against the law in all cases, past-month litterers and Millennials were not as certain about this. This indicates an opportunity for increased education among these groups with regard to the law.
 - Most residents give equal weight to littering being a Texas pride *and* environmental issue; however, a fair portion of Millennials give a bigger weight to the environment.

- Better enforcement and fines seem to resonate the most as deterrents to littering. As important motivators, these consequences often outweigh facts around taxpayer expense and the amount of litter that accumulates in Texas.

Summary Of Findings—General Population (cont.)



- Most of the general population would *not* report someone for littering, including a stranger; however, the likelihood to report increases if a letter to the offender is involved (assuming anonymity).
- Most parents have asked a child not to litter at some point, and most often when discussing good values and responsibility. Parents feel strongly that they, and other family members, have the most influence on educating children about litter.
- Around 30% of current and former smokers admitted to throwing cigarette butts out the window while driving. Most *disagreed* that “cigarette butts are not litter,” but many feel that throwing them out the window or on the ground is simply a “habit” or the only convenient way.

Summary Of Findings—Spanish Dominants



- Spanish-dominant speakers have a much lower awareness of *Don't mess with Texas* than the general population, and there is some confusion on its meaning.
 - Many Spanish dominants associate the slogan more with Texas pride aspects than litter/cleanliness.
 - Among those aware of the slogan, media and other source recall was similar to the general population in total, but higher for some specific sources (e.g., gas stations and newspapers).
- Spanish dominants were more likely to give *Don't mess with Texas* a positive impact rating (including *very positive*).
- However, incidence of littering is higher within this segment. This is especially true for small pieces of litter (gum wrappers, lottery tickets, etc.).
- Most Spanish dominants believe littering is against the law in all cases with fines/stricter enforcement cited often as suggested means of deterrence.
- Like the general population, most Spanish dominants would not report a close acquaintance for littering. However, close to 75% would be more likely to report an offender if a letter was involved. This compares to around 60% of the general population.
- This segment rated the seriousness of litter items similarly to the general population. A notable exception was food/organic material where a higher percentage believe it is serious.