

Trash Free Beach Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions Fact Sheet

1. What is a *Trash Free Beach*?

It is a solid waste management strategy that Glynn County is currently implementing on the beaches of St. Simons by removing trash and recycling receptacles from the beach area and relocating those receptacles to the parking lot areas. Beach-goers are expected to carry out the refuse they generate and dispose of it properly in the receptacles provided in the parking areas or at home. Integral to the concept is fostering a partnership between beach-goers and the Glynn County by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean beaches, reduce solid waste on the beach, and embrace the ideas of reduce, reuse, and recycle. There are many other park systems, including National Parks that have adopted this solid waste management strategy. This helps in bringing our beaches back to their natural state and eliminates the visual pollution of trash cans at beach entryways.

2. What do we (beach-goers) do with our trash on the beach?

Beach-goers are responsible for removing all refuse they generate when they leave the beach. Trash must be picked up and the area left in a clean condition before departure. Beach-goers are encouraged to come prepared when visiting the beach. If they plan to picnic or in any way generate waste, they should plan ahead to provide the means to organize materials needed, and correctly package items and refuse, in order to efficiently remove it with them by the means in which they came - by walking, bicycle, etc. The County encourages visitors to consider how they package items. Using materials that can be recycled is a positive way to help the environment. Recycling receptacles are provided alongside of the trash receptacles for your convenience.

3. Where are the *Trash Free Beach* areas in Glynn County?

All beach areas on St. Simons Island are now a part of the *Trash Free Beach* initiative. This means that receptacles will not be available on the beaches, but only in the parking areas. Previously, trash receptacles were only available between Massengale Park and the Coast Guard Station. This new initiative places all beach areas under the same “carry in, carry out” policy.

4. What does *Carry In, Carry Out* Mean?

Carry in, Carry out is an outdoor ethic that coincides with familiar *Leave No Trace* (LNT) principles. The LNT principles are utilized in the back country and wilderness areas where the desire is to maintain the natural beauty of the area. *Pack it in, Pack it out*. Put litter – even crumbs, peels and cores – in garbage bags and carry it out. Be sure to properly dispose of materials. Please consider that many items that are carried off the beach are accepted by the County’s recycling program and utilize the recycling bins accordingly.

5. What are the benefits of a *Trash Free Beach*?

- Improve the appearance of the beach by removing trash cans that detract from the beauty of the natural environment.
- Eliminating the need for trash receptacles and disposal services will allow the County an opportunity to make more productive use of its available resources and redirect staff to other important projects and operational needs.
- Fosters a partnership between visitors and the beach by encouraging all visitors to help maintain clean beaches.
- Encourages an outdoor ethic that places emphasis on recycling and reusing materials in order to reduce our impact on the environment.
- Encourages visitors to bring reusable containers and to recycle as much as possible.
- Increases visitor safety by reducing the number of insects and other pests near the boardwalk areas and eliminates odors associated with trash cans.

6. What am I supposed to do with my pet waste?

Beach-goers are required to remove pet waste and dispose of it properly in trash receptacles in the parking lot areas. The following beach access points have pet waste bag dispensers available:

- Coast Guard Station
- Massengale Park
- Goulds Inlet (15th St. East Beach)
- Driftwood Dr.
- Neptune Park
- Fifth St. (St. Simons)
- Myrtle St.

7. What do I do with my baby's diaper?

There are a variety of handy products on the market for the traveling care of a babies and small children. Items such as diapers should be disposed of in the trash receptacles provided in the parking areas. The beach access points listed above have pet waste bag dispensers. These bags may also be used for diapers if necessary, and should be thrown away in the available trash receptacles.

8. What do I do with my broken umbrella, chair, or tent frame?

Broken umbrellas, chairs, and tent frames can be left alongside the trash receptacles provided in the parking areas. Park maintenance employees will pick up these items daily and dispose of them properly. It unlawful to leave tent frames on the beach overnight. Any tent frames left on the beach overnight will be disposed of.

9. What are you going to do about the litter? People won't listen and will throw or leave their trash on the ground.

County staff has been and will remain actively engaged in litter pick up on the beach. This fact does not mean it is okay for people to package their refuse and leave it for the staff to clean up. The County is introducing a program by which beach-goers can make a personal commitment and have a stake in reducing the trash on the beach – they remove and dispose of their refuse outside of the beach area. If done properly, they will leave no trace.

Well established park programs have shown average ranges of success between 80-95%. This statistic means 80-95% of the people who visit *Trash Free Beaches* are responsibly removing their refuse. The County must deal with the rest who will leave trash behind. County staff will continue to remove litter on the beach by pick-sticking. In addition, beach-goers who leave trash behind are littering. This illegal activity is enforced by law enforcement and subject to penalty.

10. Who can I talk to about this program? I have a complaint.

First, you may start with any County employee on the beach who can assist in answering questions about the program or connect you with someone on the beach with more information. You may also contact the Glynn County Customer Service Department at 912-554-7111 or the County's website (www.glynncounty.org) for additional information.

11. Why did the County decide to go to a *Trash Free Park Program*?

Glynn County is responsible for managing beach operations efficiently and sustainably. Previous methods of servicing trash cans on the beach were extremely challenging due to the limited space and large amount of beach-goers. In addition, the tide served as a limiting factor that determined when trash cans could be emptied. Committing to a *Trash Free Beach* demonstrates our commitment to:

- Reducing visual pollution of trash cans on the beach.
- Reducing marine debris.
- Reducing the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on waste disposal.
- Reducing fuel consumption associated with trash pick-ups and disposal.
- Reducing staff hours spent on trash removal and allows the County to allocate work hours to other important functions and projects.

12. What can I do to help keep the beach clean?

Keep Golden Isles Beautiful (KGIB) has partnered with Glynn County to implement the *Trash Free Beach* initiative. KGIB has many opportunities for community members and visitors to help! Daily volunteer beach litter brigades, organized community beach sweep efforts, Adopt-A-Beach programs, and citizen litter patrol parking lot initiative are easy ways to

make a difference. The simplest way to help keep our beaches clean is to simply follow litter ordinances and encouraging others to embrace the *Trash Free Beach* directives. For more information visit the KGIB website at www.KGIB.org.