

Community Appearance Index – Litter Index

Keep America Beautiful strives to provide metrics to determine the impact of community appearance on quality-of-life. One of the tools used for measurability and accountability is the Community Appearance Index. The Community Appearance Index includes the Litter Index and Optional Indices for Illegal Signs, Graffiti, Abandoned/Junk Vehicles and Outside Storage. The Litter Index conducted as part of the affiliate development provides a baseline which affiliates may use to monitor educational efforts and determine if littering behavior is changing. The Litter Index is an annual requirement for Good Standing conducted annually, at approximately the same time each year.

Visually assessing the community is an essential part of the process. Involving community representatives from neighborhoods, businesses, and government is important to achieve solutions and to promote individual responsibility, ownership, and pride in the results.

CONDUCTING THE LITTER INDEX

Preparation of Scoring Map

The Litter Index requires that you map your community and divide it into comparable areas. Three of the key terms used in these instructional materials are “Community,” “Areas,” and “Sites.” These terms are defined as follows:

- **Community** refers to the total extent of a Keep America Beautiful affiliate’s jurisdiction, which might be a town, city, county or region.
- The community is then divided into 5-15 **Areas**, in order to break down the work into manageable units.
- Select 10-20 **Sites**, each ½ to 1 mile in length, with each Area. These **Sites** are the units to be scored using a four-point scale.

Scoring Process

Keep America Beautiful recommends 3-6 individual scorers for the Litter Index, a scoring leader, and a driver that will not score. The scorers should commit 8 hours to the scoring process, which includes training and about 1-2 hours per Area. The same scorers should score all Areas and Sites. Communities with large geographic size may require two days to complete the Index, and we encourage that the same scorers conduct the Index on both days.

Training and Scoring Guidelines

- When scoring is completed, the Site scores are averaged to determine an Area score. All Area scores are averaged to arrive at an overall Litter Index score.
- Areas should remain the same but may be changed after 3-5 years if the community has experienced significant growth or considerable re-development since the baseline Index.
- Litter Index should not be conducted immediately following a cleanup or on trash collection day.

Additional guidelines are provided in the Community Appearance Index book.

LITTER SCALE: WRITTEN DESCRIPTIONS

Score	Instructions for Scores	Instructions for Scores
1 “Minimal or No Litter”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtually no litter • 1 or 2 small items in a city block or equivalent • Collected quickly by 1 individual • Generally neat and tidy 	Virtually no litter can be observed in the Site. The scorer may see one or two small items in a city block, or equivalent. Any litter seen could be collected quickly by one individual. The entire Site has a generally neat and tidy appearance.
2 “Slightly Littered”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small amount of litter • Eye is not continually grabbed by littered items • Site cleaned in a short period of time 	Litter is obvious, but the eye is not continually grabbed by littered items. The Site could be cleaned in a short period of time.
3 “Littered”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible litter catches your eye frequently • Organized effort for removal • Considerable effort to clean 	Visible litter catches your eye frequently throughout the Site. An organized effort for removal is required with considerable effort to clean up the Site.
4 “Extremely Littered”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous amount of litter • Litter first thing noticed • Might include an illegal dump • Equipment may be required for removal • Strong impression of a lack of concern about litter 	A continuous amount of litter is one of the first things noticed about the Site. Illegal dumpsites might be observed. Equipment may be required to clean up. There is a strong impression of a lack of concern about litter in the Site.

Litter Index Scoring Sheet

Keep _____ Beautiful

Area _____ Date _____ Scorer _____

Site	Score (circle score)				Notable Conditions
1	1	2	3	4	
2	1	2	3	4	
3	1	2	3	4	
4	1	2	3	4	
5	1	2	3	4	
6	1	2	3	4	
7	1	2	3	4	
8	1	2	3	4	
9	1	2	3	4	
10	1	2	3	4	
11	1	2	3	4	
12	1	2	3	4	
13	1	2	3	4	
14	1	2	3	4	
15	1	2	3	4	
16	1	2	3	4	
17	1	2	3	4	
18	1	2	3	4	
19	1	2	3	4	
20	1	2	3	4	