



Land Use Services Department  
Code Enforcement

Tom Hudson  
Director

**Code Enforcement Illegal Dumping Program**

*"Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible." - St. Francis of Assisi*

**Program Overview** – San Bernardino County has funded Code Enforcement staff that are completely dedicated to addressing illegal dumping in a multi-faceted, interdisciplinary manner.

**Challenge** – Because of reductions in Code Enforcement staff resulting from the 2008 Recession in tandem with the size of San Bernardino County's thousands of square miles of accessible yet largely undeveloped land, illegal dumping had become a significant and visible problem, particularly in the desert regions of the County, including significant amounts of construction debris and waste tires.

**Innovative Solution – Use of Work Release Crews to Remove Illegally Dumped Material** – The widely accepted Broken Windows theory correctly posits that one broken window leads to another broken window, or illegally dumped material will lead to more illegally dumped material. This meant it was necessary to start abating illegally dumped material on a large scale and in a consistent manner. Code Enforcement made use of inmate work release crews accessed through the Sheriff's Department to remove illegally dumped material. In the first year of this program (FY15-16), these crews were in the field an average of four days a week. Results of their efforts are shown in the chart below. County Code advertised its efforts in a variety of ways, including social media and signage in the area while it was being cleaned up. This important first step accomplished the following:

1. Changed the visual pattern language associated with illegal dumping. Less illegally dumped material has resulted in less illegal dumping. In the first year of the program, it was necessary to have clean-up crews in the field four days a week. In the second year of the program (FY-16-17), crews are only needed in the field two days a week.
2. Sent a clear message that illegal dumping was a concern and a regulatory priority for the County. Residents knew it was **Code Enforcement** (the word 'code' is a synonym for the word 'law') that was in the field addressing the problem of illegal dumping.
3. Provided Code Enforcement staff greater knowledge of the various types of illegally dumped material; largely waste tires and construction waste associated with paving.

Code Enforcement also worked cooperatively with community groups and conducted surveillance to attempt to catch people illegally dumping. While these were important components of the program, the real engine of the program was the use of inmate crews on a consistent and ongoing manner.

**Originality** – It is common for counties to use inmate crews to abate illegally dumped material, most often in an ad hoc manner. It is common for Code Enforcement programs to compel property owners to clean up illegally dumped material. What is not common is for Code Enforcement programs to be given the resources to make consistent use of inmate labor as an integral part of solving what is – on many levels – a very complex regulatory issue.

**Cost Effectiveness** – On an annual basis San Bernardino County spends \$420,000 to fund and support three full time positions – two Code Enforcement Officers, and one administrative position. This investment has resulted in the County being able to access thousands of hours of labor dedicated to cleaning up illegally dumped material at no cost to the County.

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Results –

FY 15/16		FY 16/17	
Total Parcels Cleared	632	Total Parcels Cleared	640
Type of Debris Abated from Cleared Parcels:	# of Parcels with Debris	Type of Debris Abated from Cleared Parcels:	# of Parcels with Debris
Asphalt	8	Asphalt	1
Boat	15	Boat	7
Carpet	47	Carpet	49
Concrete	20	Concrete	2
Construction Debris	98	Construction Debris	112
eWaste	26	eWaste	60
Furniture	284	Furniture	380
Green Waste	35	Green Waste	17
Hazardous Waste*	12	Hazardous Waste*	23
Household Trash	306	Household Trash	345
Tires	209	Tires	319
Tons of Trash Abated	324.02	Tons of Trash Abated	125.27
Number of Tires Abated	9325	Number of Tires Abated	6530
Tons of Tires Abated	123.51	Tons of Tires Abated	43.17
Labor Hours	2915	Labor Hours	1984
Labor Savings Using Work Release Crew	\$174,900	Labor Savings Using Work Release Crew	\$119,040

This quantitative information over two fiscal years demonstrates the value of a 'Broken Windows' regulatory approach, which is to replace and protect the window.

There is another important outcome associated with the program. Waste tires are a significant part of illegally dumped material. Good regulatory practices address problems at their root. It was clear to County staff that illegally dumped waste tires came from tire stores and waste tire haulers. This led the County to apply to the State for a grant to fund positions that will do nothing but inspect and monitor tire stores and waste tire haulers. During the application process, the County made it clear to the decision makers at the State that the County had a long term commitment to the illegal dumping issue. As a result, for FY17-18 the State awarded the County the maximum amount allowed by the Waste Tire Generator Grant - \$600,000 – which will fund four new full time positions that will only be used to regulate waste tires generators. This will result in all waste tire generators in the County being inspected once a year by County Code Enforcement Officers instead of once every three years by State inspectors. This will help change the word on the street about the consequences of the improper disposal of waste tires.

Illegally dumped material, as a type of a 'broken window' is a significant source of blight. The Broken Windows theory clearly and correctly points out the negative consequences to communities of ignoring broken windows. At first, this problem seemed overwhelming. Staff started by doing what was necessary - using inmate crews. They then did what was possible – applying for a grant. Two years into the program, the County is significantly closer to being able to effectively manage a large and a long standing problem.

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