



SHELBY COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

October 1, 2025

From: James Frost
Shelby County, Environmental Services Manager

Subject: General Information Related to the Collection of Litter and Unauthorized Signs within the Public Rights of Way and Public Property

The collection of roadside litter in Shelby County is required to protect the public health, safety, environment, and quality of life of the citizens of Shelby County. This memorandum is to summarize Shelby County Environmental Services Department current practices of collecting litter and unauthorized signs of various types within the roadway rights of way and other public properties. The Shelby County Environmental Department field personnel shall collect all deposited ground litter and signage that is attached to the utility poles, traffic signs, trees, and ground located on the road rights of way or other public property within Shelby County. Field personnel records the information related to all collected litter and signage onto daily activities logs. Information related to the location of all collected signs is documented.

Environmental Services Department office personnel shall, if necessary, utilize the recorded data on the daily activities log to notify the various parties related to litter or unauthorized signs that are collected. This information may be used for enforcement actions. If ground-based litter or garbage contains personal information such as bank statements, bank card bills, utility bills, or other documents that clearly identifies a person's name, the document will be placed within an envelope and attached to the daily activity log for future use if required. All collected litter and unauthorized signs collected are transported to the applicable county dumpster or directly to the landfill. All signs will be held at the landfill for 14 days for owner pickup.

Utility companies (AT&T, Charter Communications and Alabama Power) have advised that they have not granted permission to affix signage to any utility poles. If signage is discovered affixed to utility poles at heights greater than that which allows removal from the ground, the local utility company will be provided notice of any such signage and it will be removed by the local utility with their personnel.

Shelby County has not granted permission to attach signage to traffic signs or street signs. Unauthorized signage or other attachments to such traffic signs can distract the public from the intended purpose of the traffic or street sign and can also obstruct the line of sight for those using or entering the public roadway which can create a significant safety concern. Unauthorized signs may prevent mowing activities and other roadway maintenance activities. Signage A sign on the right of way announcing that the house or property is for sale when the signage is on or adjacent to the subject property will be allowed if they do not create safety issues or prohibit the performance of required roadway maintenance activities.

These actions described above related to the collection of litter and unauthorized signage are in accordance with the

Alabama Code Title 13A. Criminal Code Section 13a-7-29- Criminal Littering (see attached).

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Alabama Code Title 13A. Criminal Code Section 13a-7-29 – Criminal Littering:

(a) A person commits the crime of criminal littering if he or she engages in any of the following acts: (1) Knowingly deposits in any manner litter on any public or private property or in any public or private waters without permission to do so. For purposes of this subdivision, any series of items found in the garbage, trash, or other discarded material including, but not limited to, bank statements, utility bills, bank card bills, and other financial documents, clearly bearing the name of a person shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the person whose name appears on the material knowingly deposited the litter. Advertising, marketing, and campaign materials and literature shall not be sufficient to constitute a rebuttable presumption of criminal littering under this subsection. (2) Negligently deposits, in any manner, glass or other dangerously pointed or edged objects on or adjacent to water to which the public has lawful access for bathing, swimming, or fishing, or on or upon a public highway or within the right-of-way. (3) Discharges sewage, oil products, or litter into a river, inland lake, or stream within the state or within territorial waters of the state. (4) a. Throws, drops, or permits to be thrown or dropped any litter upon or alongside any highway, road, street, or public right-of-way and does not immediately remove the same or cause it to be removed; or b. Removes a wrecked or damaged vehicle from a highway and does not remove glass or other injurious substance dropped upon the highway from the vehicle. (b) For the purposes of this section, litter means rubbish, refuse, waste material, garbage, dead animals or fowl, offal, paper, glass, cans, bottles, trash, scrap metal, debris, plastic, cigarettes, cigars, containers of urine, food containers, rubber tires, or any foreign substance. Any agricultural product in its natural state that is unintentionally deposited on a public highway, road, street, or public right-of-way is not litter for purposes of this section or Section 32-5-76. Any other law or ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding, the unintentional depositing of an agricultural product in its natural state on a public highway, road, street, or right-of-way shall not constitute unlawful littering or any similarly prohibited activity. (c) It is no defense under subdivisions (a)(3) and (a)(4) that the actor did not intend, or was unaware of, the act charged. (d)(1) Criminal littering is a Class B misdemeanor. The fine for the first conviction shall be up to five hundred dollars (\$500). The punishment for the second and any subsequent conviction shall include either a fine of up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and up to 100 hours of community service in the form of picking up litter along highways, roads, streets, public rights-of-way, public sidewalks, public walkways, or public waterways, or by a fine of not less than two thousand dollars (\$2,000) and not more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000). (2) In addition to the penalties provided in subdivision (1), littering of any of the following in violation of subsection (a) shall result in an additional fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500) per violation: a. Cigarettes or cigars. b. Containers of urine. c. Food containers. (e) Fifty percent of the fine from a conviction under this section shall be distributed by the court to the State General Fund and 50 percent to the municipality or county, or both, following a determination by the court of whose law enforcement agencies or departments have been a participant in the arrest or citation resulting in the fine. The award and distribution to the county and municipality shall be made on the basis of the percentage as determined by the court, which the respective agency or department contributed to the police work resulting in the arrest, and shall be spent by the governing body on law and litter enforcement purposes only. Litter enforcement may include, but not be limited to, anti-littering education, publication and distribution of related educational materials, and anti-littering advertising. (f) No action for criminal littering based on evidence that creates a rebuttable presumption under subdivision (a)(1) shall be brought against a person by or on behalf of a county or municipal governing body unless he or she has been given written notice by a designee of the governing body that items found in an accumulation of garbage, trash, or other discarded materials contain his or her name, and that, under subdivision (a)(1), there is a rebuttable presumption that he or she knowingly deposited the litter. The notice shall advise the person that criminal littering is a Class B misdemeanor, and shall provide that, unless the person can present satisfactory information or evidence to rebut the presumption to the designee of the governing body within 15 days from the date of the notice, an action for criminal littering may be filed against him or her in the appropriate court. If the person responds to the notice and presents information or evidence to the designee of the governing body, the designee shall review the information or evidence presented and make a determination as to whether or not an action should be brought against the person for criminal littering. The designee shall provide written notice to the person of its determination, and if the intent is to proceed with an action for criminal littering, the notice shall

be sent before any action is filed. (g) Upon approval of the county commission, the county license inspector and his or her deputies employed under Section 40-12-10 shall have the same authority to issue citations against persons violating this section as county license inspectors have with regard to persons violating revenue laws as provided in Section 40-12-10. In addition, the county solid waste officer, as defined in subsection (b) of Section 22-27-3, shall have the same authority to issue citations against persons violating this section as solid waste officers have with regard to persons violating the Solid Wastes Disposal Act pursuant to subsection (b) of Section 22-27-3. (h) Nothing in this section shall authorize a county license inspector or solid waste officer to take any person into custody pursuant to this section unless the inspector or officer is a law enforcement officer employed by a law enforcement agency as defined in Section 36-21-40. (Acts 1977, No. 607, p. 812, §2725; Acts 1990, No. 90-585, p. 1020; Acts 1997, No. 97-712, p. 1475, §1; Act 98-494, p. 954, §1; Act 2001-469, p. 623, §1; Act 2010-260, p. 468, §1; Act 2019-530, §1.)