

## Why Clean Up Animal Waste?

There are many reasons why members should be cleaning up after their companion animals. It is against the law not to clean up animal waste and a fineable offense. It is not pleasant when members, their children and/or their animals step in animal waste left by others or when members are forced to smell animal waste that has been allowed to accumulate in members' yards. Members who do not clean up their animals' waste are not being fair to the majority of members who do clean up after their companion animals. Animal waste that is not cleaned up, or is disposed of improperly can also effect the environment and human health.

While it may be difficult to view animal waste as a major source of pollution, it can have a big impact on water quality and even human health and the health of other animals. Animal waste contains nutrients and pathogens. When this waste ends up in water bodies, it releases nutrients that cause excessive growth of algae and weeds. This makes water murky and unusable for swimming, boating or fishing. Some diseases can be transmitted by animal waste through contact with the soil, particularly when it is allowed to accumulate in members' yards or common areas. Wildlife, children playing outside and adults who garden are most at risk.

Members should not flush animal waste in their toilets as water treatment plants are designed to handle human waste, not animal waste. As most animals are meat eaters, their waste should not be placed in a regular compost pile as any parasites, bacteria and viruses are not readily destroyed and can be passed on to humans or other animals. Never place animal waste in a storm drain and avoid allowing animals to do their business within 200 feet of a body of water.

If a member encounters someone who is not cleaning up animal waste, the member might want to offer a bag to that person. If that doesn't work, avoid confronting the member. Members may deliver a signed letter providing information about the incident to Member Services, or send an email with this information to [Memaa@ghi.coop](mailto:Memaa@ghi.coop).

### **Directions for Cleaning up Animal Waste**

1. Always carry plastic bags when walking your companion animals. Newspaper bags, food storage bags, or grocery bags are ideal for cleaning up animal waste.
2. Some people place a paper towel in each empty bag to help with clean up, or to clean their hands if they happen to get them dirty. For smaller dogs or cats, using a paper towel may be the easiest approach to cleaning up animal waste, but remember to place the paper towel and waste into a plastic bag before disposing of it.
3. You can also place a plastic bag over your hand. Once the bag is covering your hand, pick up the waste. After you have cleaned up all the waste, pull the bag back off of your hand. Tie the bag before disposing of it in the nearest trashcan.