

# Basic Psychology of Illegal Dumping




Christine H. McClare – Region 6 Solid Waste

## Illegal dumping is different than littering:

- Dumping always involves intent.
- The amount or type of material left is different than litter.

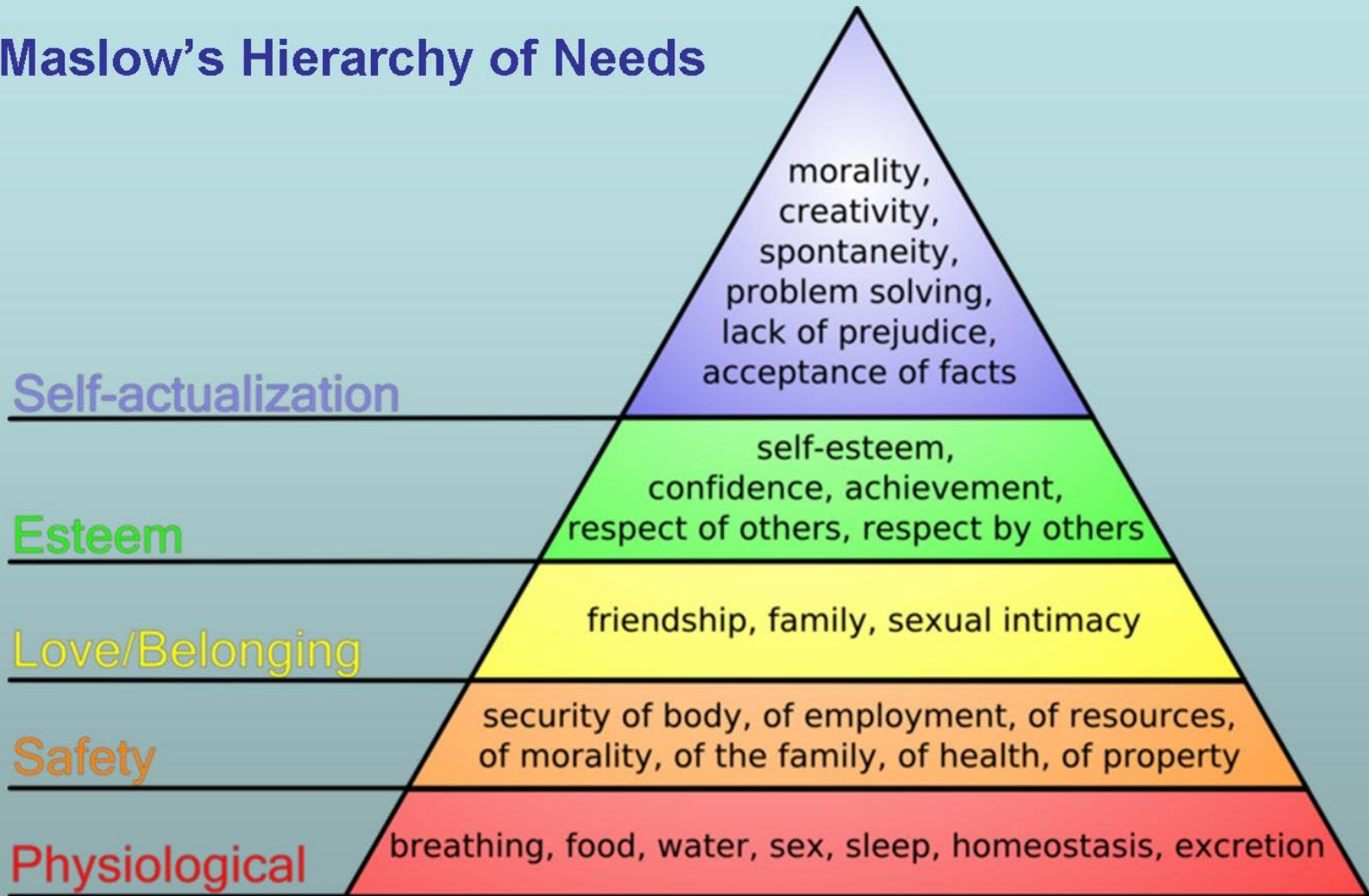
Dumping is considered a crime and the penalties reflect the seriousness of the offense (example \$697.50 vs \$237.50 for littering).



- There are 2 groups of people – those that will NEVER dump and those that MIGHT.
- Note: There is no evidence to suggest that changes in rules to sorting waste or increased fees lead to increased illegal dumping.

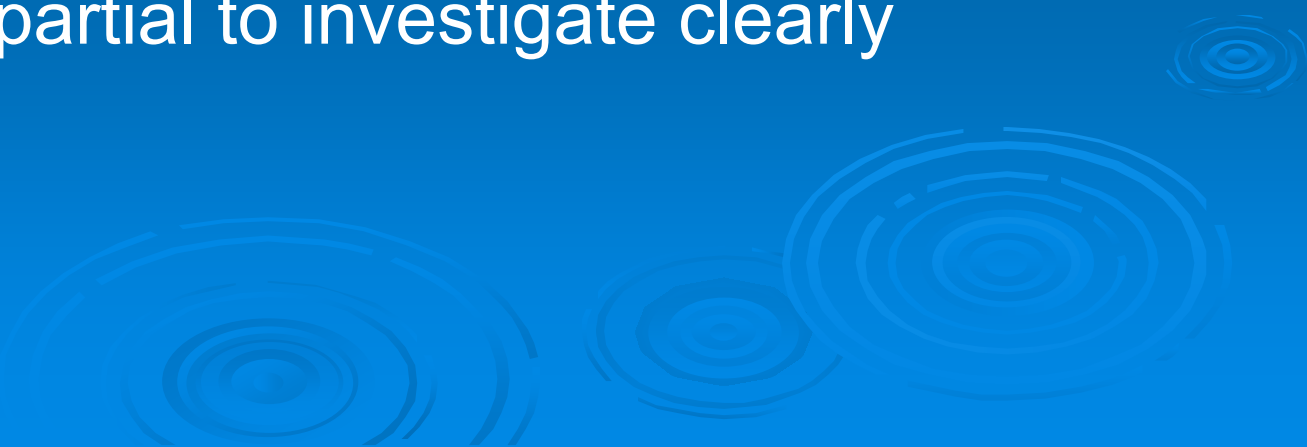


# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



From: Wikipedia – Spring 2007

# Our Biases

- We interpret based on OUR experience and on OUR current life situation
  - We see ourselves higher on the pyramid than others
  - Remain impartial to investigate clearly
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# Why Do People Dump?

- Fear/No Fear
- Care/Don't Care
- Money
- Social Issues
- Mental Issues



# Fear / No Fear

- Scared to ask/learn
- Overwhelmed/panic/no of time
- Something to hide (illegal or frowned upon)
- Guilt shifting – not my fault
- Justify as not that bad – it's only wood

# Care/Don't Care

- Know that it is hard to be caught
- Aware the penalty is low
- Worried of being judged
- Weak social/community ties





# Money

- Unaware of tip fees and think it is expensive
- Don't realize fines can be substantial
- Being hired to dispose and choosing to keep the tip fee and dump it

# Social Issues

- Weak ties to the community
- Poor socialization
- Marginalized by other circumstances
- Group think
- Learned behaviour or historical dumping

# Mental Issues

- Revenge, control or power push back
- Marginalized previously
- Thrill seeking
- Mental or physical illness or drugs affecting decision making

# Will Catching Them Help?

- Yes for Care, Fear and Money – Nudge them
- No for Social and Mental – No accountability
- All benefit from education/enforcement
- Lasting change results from the belief that they could get caught, that society will not accept and something is harmed .

# How Do We Reach?

- Get the community talking and make the public aware of those caught/efforts to enforce.



# How Do We Reach?

- Unique outreach required for non-conformists.



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# How Do We Reach?

- Put a face on what is harmed.





# Thank You

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The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the lower right quadrant, there are several faint, concentric circular ripples, resembling water droplets hitting a surface, which are lighter in color than the background.