

Monica Robinson • Illegal Dumping - Tires, Mosquitoes



Monica Robinson is the Environmental Planner at the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness (FCDHW). She coordinates the Environmental Justice (EJ) Initiative, which involves recommending policy changes; providing public health input to policy, zoning, planning, developmental proposals; educating; and promoting EJ. Her 18 years in public health brings experience in Environmental Health work which includes permitting, inspections, and enforcement. She has served and currently participates on various work groups, steering committees, and advisory committees. Ms. Robinson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science and a Master of Business Administration from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia and Atlanta, Georgia, respectively.

Discussion Notes

Illegal dumping can lead to health issues, especially during flood events; water can carry the toxic chemicals, sharp objects, biomedical waste, and pests into the community. Air pollution may also result when tires catch on fire. We need to consider what material was dumped at a particular site. An analysis of hazardous materials should inform the appropriate use of land, even when it looks “clean.”

We need to have locals who are already in the community disseminate this information, since community members are not receptive to outsiders giving them negative information about their neighborhood. Information about illegal dumping should be presented in understandable ways—pictorially and in multiple languages, for example.

When dealing with illegal dumping, first consult the county health department because they have health jurisdiction and can then bring concerns to the city. Don't be afraid to report illegal dumping. Use keywords in conversations with authorities: mosquitoes, rodents, vegetative overgrowth. A business perspective that identifies fiscal incentives and possible policy changes will be the most effective solution.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

Know the potential hazards, and protect yourself.

Use the available resources.

Network to seek partnerships within the community.