

# The POOP on Professional Scoopers

Land mines or lawn sausages, no matter what clever name you pick, dog poop stinks. More than one backyard barbecue has been interrupted by a misstep in something less than pleasant. Once the dreaded weekend chore, dog owners can now enter their backyards free of both poop and scoopers.

Professional doggy poop scooper companies offer people the enjoyment of canine companionship without the hassles of backyard clean up. In today's busy lifestyle, one less chore is a good thing, particularly this one. "People just don't like to do it," says Mike Burns, owner of Scoop's Pet Waste Removal. "Customers love the service; they say they couldn't do without it."

There are plenty of reasons to go with such a service. For instance - your family's protection. Bacteria and parasites can reside in waste which can be transmitted to other animals and family members. For the environment, storm runoff can carry contaminants and pollute waterways. It can also increase nitrogen levels in the water, which depletes oxygen harming plants, fish and other wildlife.



You can do it for your lawn; dog poop is not a fertilizer, think about all those ugly brown patches. (Refer to Fetch Magazine's May 2005 issue for lawn care advice.) It's also the law. Many communities require that you pick up after you pet. Pile Patrol's Gretchen Gibb reminds owners that in some communities what you do with the waste is restricted. "Owner's aren't supposed to throw it away," she said, "it's supposed to be flushed." That makes the scooper's haul away service a very appealing option.

No one likes to risk stepping in a mess and dragging it into the house or car. Nor does anyone like the family battles of who cleaned the yard last and whose up next. Not to mention it's a lot more neighborly to not force those next to you to have to see or smell the mess in your backyard.

These services come with a variety of options. Price is usually dependant on the size of the yard and the number of dogs, but it can be as low as \$7 per visit. The scoopers bring their own equipment and take the waste with them. Gretchen Gibb also offers a litter box service for dog owners with cats. Owners get two clean litter boxes; they bag up the soiled one and replace it with the clean one. Gretchen picks up the used box and leaves another sanitized one.

In addition to being a convenience for pet owners, professional pooper-scoopers can provide an invaluable service to elderly or disabled clients, saving them from one of the more physical challenges of pet ownership. It's the people that have kept Mike Burns at it for three years. "It isn't the work," replied Mike when asked what he likes about his job. "I really like the customer interaction."

For Gretchen Gibb, who started her service in August of 1993, it's the travel. "I like going from house to house, although it's always a yard, it's still like always having a different environment," she said. "I also like the down time I get in my car." There's plenty of travel time for those in the poop industry. The average

visit is less than 15 minutes per house, longer for larger or messier yards, and they might visit up to 50 clients a day in the busy spring season.



So for those owners without the time or the interest to pick up another pile, a professional service might be the way to go. The services listed here can be contacted at 262-366-7949 for Mike Burn's Scoop's Pet Waste Removal or, to reach Gretchen Gibb, owner of Pile Patrol, call 414-6k9-poop.

In addition to being an avid dog lover, **Keri Meyer** has spent several years in the veterinary field, currently as Assistant Hospital Manager at the Wisconsin Veterinary Referral Center.

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