

# Tobacco-Free Grounds Policy Toolkit for Worksites

Adapted from CDC and  
Prevention Minnesota  
Tobacco-Free Toolkits



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## Tobacco-Free Outdoor Grounds Policies: The Rationale for Worksites

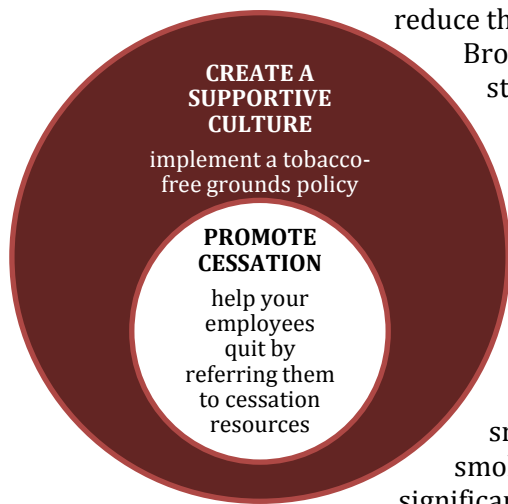
Cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and is responsible for one of every five deaths (CDC, 2008). There is substantial evidence linking exposure to secondhand smoke with a range of serious and life threatening health impacts, including heart disease, cancer, asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory problems (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2004). According to the Surgeon General, people who are exposed to second hand smoke on a daily basis have a 25% to 30% higher risk of heart disease and a 20% to 30% higher risk of developing lung cancer.

In Minnesota, 21 percent of people smoke or use tobacco products and more than half are trying to quit (Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey, 2008). The fact that so many smokers make multiple attempts to quit demonstrates both high interest in quitting and the need for support in overcoming nicotine addiction. Quitting smoking reduces the risk of premature death and disease, and while all smokers benefit from quitting, the earlier they quit, the more likely they are to realize substantial health benefits (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1990).

A tobacco-free outdoor grounds policy in worksites is one of the most effective and lasting approaches to reducing employee tobacco use. All indoor workplaces in Minnesota are required by law to be smoke free. Extending an organization's tobacco policy to cover workplace grounds as well as buildings provides the strongest support for employees to quit smoking.

There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke (DHHS, 2006). There is emerging evidence on how smoking affects air quality in outdoor locations (Repace, 2007; Boffi, Ruprecht, Mazza, Ketznel & Invernizzi, 2006; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Turner, 2005). A recent study which measured cigarette smoke levels in a variety of outdoor locations showed that a person sitting near a smoker in an outdoor area could be exposed to levels of cigarette smoke similar to the exposure of someone sitting in an indoor tavern where smoking is allowed (Klepeis, Ott & Switzer, 2007). Therefore, the second-hand smoke in outdoor areas where people tend to congregate can present a real health risk to patrons and staff.

Evidence suggests that tobacco policies help to support smokers who are trying to quit as well as reduce their overall cigarette consumption (Chapman, Borland, Scollo, Brownson, Daminello & Woodward, 1999). According to a 2006 study, 54% of smokers who had tried to quit found that seeing someone with a cigarette was a trigger to relapse, while 40% said that smelling a cigarette was a trigger to relapse (Centre for Health Research and Psycho-oncology, 2007). In Minnesota, there is strong evidence that tobacco-free policies anywhere on the property outside the buildings might encourage quitting (Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey, 2008). Among smokers who work where smoking is not allowed outside the buildings, 72 percent have tried to quit smoking in the past year compared with 51 percent of smokers who have tried to quit among those who work where smoking is allowed outside the buildings. This is a statistically significant difference.



Enacting a tobacco-free policy versus a smoke-free policy advocates for the health of all employees including the users of tobacco. A smoking-only ban could inadvertently cause

a rise in other tobacco usage. Therefore a tobacco-free worksite is important because not just cigarettes but snuff, chew or spit tobacco can cause addiction and disease. As companies, local governments and states ban smoking, the tobacco industry seeks to expand the use of smokeless tobacco through aggressive marketing and new products (National Cancer Institute, US National Institutes of Health, 2008).

A tobacco-free policy is not only good for the health of employees but for the wealth of the business. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention puts a \$3,391 price tag on each employee who smokes: \$1,760 in lost productivity and \$1,623 in excess medical expenditures (Fellows, Trosclair, & Rivera, 2002). Employees that smoke had about two times more lost production time per week than workers who never smoked, a cost of \$27 billion to employers (Stewart, et al., 2003). Businesses pay an average of \$2,189 in workers' compensation costs for smokers compared with \$176 for nonsmokers (Musich, Napier & Edington, 2001).

Overall, providing a tobacco-free environment is one of the most effective ways to protect the health of employees, clients and visitors to worksite facilities.

### **Tobacco-Free Policy: Steps to Implementation**

- Form a workgroup
- Conduct an assessment
- Develop an action plan
- Draft a policy statement
- Become familiar with cessation resources
- Develop a communication plan
- Prepare for implementation
- Implement policy/promote cessation resources
- Enforce policy
- Conduct evaluation and continue monitoring

**“Providing a tobacco-free environment is one of the most effective ways we know to protect the health of employees, clients and visitors to our facilities. By creating tobacco-free worksites, not just smoke-free ones, we are addressing all health risks associated with tobacco use and supporting healthy choices.”**

### **Form a Workgroup**

When changing policies it is important that employees feel part of the policy development and implementation. If your organization has a wellness committee that meets regularly, that group may serve as the workgroup.

- Get leadership support- it is one of the most often cited keys to successfully implementing a tobacco-free policy.
- Identify a champion for health improvement initiatives.
  - This person should be able to discuss the importance of employee health improvement to the organization's leaders. This person's role will be to coordinate the health improvement initiatives, communicate with leadership, and evaluate initiatives.
- Include human resource staff. Having these individuals involved can help you sell the initiatives to others.
- Identify a committee chair (or co-chairs).
  - Select someone who is a supporter of the tobacco-free policy, is a person of authority, is able to handle controversy, is well respected in the workplace and has experience working with people.
- Define the purpose and role of the committee and describe how wellness supports your organization's mission.

- Senior leadership must be able to see how wellness initiatives will move the organization towards its goals. Employee wellness gives some organization a competitive edge.
- Identify and recruit members (the team should represent the diversity of the workplace).
- Schedule the team to meet regularly on paid time.

### **Conduct an assessment**

Before implementing a tobacco-free grounds policy at your worksite it is recommended to conduct an assessment to determine what policies already exist, what cessation services are covered by insurance, to identify key decision-makers, and to determine the level of support by management and employees.

Some of the main questions you will want to ask, through a focus group or survey include:

- What is your current tobacco use policy? (No tobacco use in buildings or on grounds, tobacco use allowed on grounds but only in designated spaces away from the buildings, no tobacco-use policy).
- Why are you developing or enhancing your tobacco-use policy? (employee health, employee complaints, create a positive work culture, litter, healthcare costs, improve safety, decrease secondhand smoke).
- Where do people smoke now? (in front of the doors when visitors come, in a designated location, in the parking lots)
- Who in your organization's top management supports the implementation of a stronger tobacco-use policy?
- What are your organization's expectations of a tobacco-free worksite? How will you measure success?
- Approximately what percentage of your employees uses tobacco?
- What types of tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, spit tobacco, cigars, pipes, etc.) will be covered by the policy? (eliminating just cigarettes sends the message that cigars, spit tobacco, cigars, pipes are not as bad for you)
- What tobacco cessation programs and resources can your organization provide to employees? Do you currently offer smoking cessation programs on site? Do you refer employees to existing cessation resources available in the community? Do you currently have a tobacco quit medication benefit—either over the counter nicotine replacement therapy or prescription or counseling—through your health plan?
- How does your organization plan to enforce the policy? Will security enforce the policy, supervisors enforces the policy, it is all employees responsibility to enforce the policy

### **Develop an action plan**

Develop an action plan with the workgroup based on the assessment findings. The action plan should include goals, a timeline, and ideas about the policy and policy communication.

Short-term goals (within one year)

By [date] our organization will have written, approved and implemented a policy prohibiting use of tobacco on our property including: buildings, grounds, parking lots and company vehicles.

*Possible measures of progress*

- written and approved policy
- inclusion of policy in organization's policy review cycle
- inclusion of policy into new employee orientation

- outline of consequences and enforcement responsibility in policy and
- supervisor training/procedures

By [date], our organization will have identified effective stop-smoking programs and made them available at no cost to employees.

*Possible measures of progress*

- a no-cost tailored stop-smoking program is available to employees
- communication of availability of stop-smoking programs (ideally, numerous times and via numerous methods pre- and post-policy implementation)

By [date], our organization will have made quit medications available to employees at low- or no-cost.

*Possible measures of progress*

- access to low- or no-cost quit medications
- communication of availability of quit medications (ideally, numerous times and via numerous methods pre- and post-policy implementation)

*Example Timeline*

<b>Month 1</b>	Identify advisory committee chair and members; Conduct an assessment (gather data and set goals)
<b>Month 2</b>	Gain leadership support and set an implementation date; Announce date of policy change to management and employees
<b>Month 3</b>	Schedule and hold advisory and workgroup meetings; Write the policy
<b>Month 4</b>	Develop a communications plan include communication on policy and promote cessation; Implement communications plan; Arrange opportunities for employee feedback
<b>Month 5</b>	Add signage to building and grounds and add to policy handbook; Offer and promote stop-smoking programs and quit medications
<b>Month 6</b>	Remove tobacco elements from workplace (i.e., ashtrays, outdoor huts, etc.); Engage in day-of communications and activities
<b>Post-policy</b>	Add policy to new employee orientation and policy review cycle; Review and refine policy and processes; Measure and report on progress

**Draft a policy**

What is the purpose of the policy?

- The policy should briefly explain why your organization is introducing the policy.

When will the policy go into effect?

- Think about using dates on which individuals might be trying to quit smoking, such as the New Year, the Great American Smoke Out or Kick Butts Day.

Who will be subject to the policy?

- Include all individuals at your workplace. This may include but is not limited to union employees, non-union employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors. Make sure enforcement equitable across all employees. If you plan to include union workers, you'll want to work closely with union representatives to make sure the policy fits with any collective bargaining agreements.

What tobacco products will be included?

- Ideally, include all tobacco products: cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and pipes.

Where will smoking be prohibited?

- Ideally, include all buildings and grounds, parking lots and private vehicles parked on company property. Determine what makes sense given your physical location(s).

How will the policy be enforced?

- It may be easiest to make this policy as consistent with other workplace policies. Decide who will monitor and enforce employee behavior.

Where will permanent no-smoking signage be posted?

- Plan for signage at building entrances and entrances to the grounds.

What department/individual can employees contact with questions about the policy?

- Many organizations enact this policy as a Human Resources policy; if so, employees can be directed to the appropriate HR person or department.

When/how often will policy be reviewed?

- At a minimum, plan to review the policy according to the standard policy review cycle used by your organization. Looking at the policy one year after it has been implemented might be a good idea.

What resources will be provided for employees who want to quit smoking?

- The best-practice combination of is a stop-smoking program AND access to low- or no-cost quit medications.

### Drafting a policy

- What is the rationale for the policy?
- Who does the policy apply to?
- What tobacco products does the policy include?
- Where is it in effect?
- How is it enforced?

### Become familiar with cessation resources

There are a number of effective cessation resources and quit medications available. Determine what your health plan covers for tobacco cessation. If your organization's goal is to reduce employee tobacco use, make every effort to cover cessation programs and quitting medications.

**"Tobacco cessation services are more powerful when they are delivered within a workplace culture that supports quitting"**

If your health plan doesn't cover cessation programs or quit medications, determine whether there are community resources that you could refer employees to or think about offering an onsite cessation program or referring employees to community resources.

### Develop a communication plan

Developing a communication plan and timeline is advisable for smooth implementation. The communication plan can be developed in parallel with the previous steps in this toolkit so that it is ready for use when the planning phase is complete. You may want to consider developing separate communication plans for the policy and cessation services components of the initiative in case the components are not implemented simultaneously.



Below are some sample questions that will help you develop your communication plan:

- Which modes of communication are most suitable for your employee population?
- Based on the mode(s) of communication selected, what materials are needed to promote the initiative? Can existing materials be used, or should new materials be developed? Who is responsible for obtaining or developing the materials? For distributing the materials?
- When and by whom should key tasks be completed?
- Who will be responsible for tracking and responding to employee questions and comments? What mechanism will be established to encourage employee feedback and questions?

- Who will evaluate the communication strategies? What data should be collected and kept?



Plan to communicate with employees often before implementation of the policy. Use various communication avenues. Have some of the communications come from the workgroup and some from your company leader. Set a positive tone by stating the purpose of the policy is to support employees who use tobacco and who want to quit. It is not intended to force anyone to quit smoking.

Once the policy is implemented, permanent signs should be placed at campus entrances and building entrances.

Provide all employees with a copy of the policy. Place a form in each employee's file stating that the employee has received a copy of the policy and enforcement procedures and has agreed to abide by the policy.

### Communication plan ideas

#### Electronic Documents

- E-mail announcements
- Frequently asked questions
- Official implementation announcement
- Organization electronic newsletter article

#### Printed Materials

- Flyers/banners
- Health tickets
- Payroll stuffers

#### Web Sites

- Employee/policy Intranet site

#### Other Communication Activities

- New employee orientation meetings
- Permanent campus signs
- Question and answer session
- Special events
- Staff meetings
- Table and bulletin board displays



### Prepare for implementation

- Remove all ashtrays from building entrances.
- Remove any smoking "huts" from the property.
- Clean outdoor areas formerly used as smoking areas.
- Place permanent signage at entrances
- Provide information sheets on new policy, including maps of property lines.
- Send day-of memo to all employees to remind them of policy.
- Promote cessation programs and quit-medications.
- Have leaders and workgroup members remind people of the policy.
- Plan a celebration implementation day.

### Implement the policy and promote cessation!

### **Enforce the policy**

In the weeks before the policy takes effect, management should clearly communicate to supervisors and security officials their role in enforcing the policy, including specific guidance on how to correct noncompliance. Consider training supervisors and security officials in enforcement procedures, handling or filing complaints, and conflict management.

Monitor enforcement to make sure that the policy is being applied in an equitable manner that does not single out or exempt any particular groups of employees. Suggest that top management officials walk through campus areas, especially areas where employees have traditionally smoked in the past, during the first few days after the policy takes effect as a visible show of support for the policy.

### **Collect data and monitor results**

If your organization has a regular cycle for reviewing policies, add the tobacco policy to this review process. To maintain leadership support, measure and report on the success of the tobacco policy, based on your organization's goals and your available data.

### **Key Principles for Successful Tobacco-Free Policy Implementation**

- Focus on smoke, not the smoker.
- Focus on health and safety regarding tobacco, not individual rights.
- Obtain management commitment and support. This support can be made visible to employees through the use of paycheck stuffers, posters, newsletters and other company communication channels.
- Provide training for middle managers and supervisors on policy communication and enforcement.
- Provide real and visible opportunities for employee participation in policy planning and implementation.
- Educate the workplace community about the hazards of combining SHS and materials used in work processes.
- Allow four to six months from the time of the announcement to implementation, depending on the size of the organization and the magnitude of the change from the old to the new policy.
- To maximize motivation, plan to implement the policy in conjunction with national events such as the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout in November or around New Year's Day (when people are making New Year's resolutions).
- Ensure that restrictions and enforcement are equitable across job categories.
- Offer smoking cessation programs to all employees and their families before and after the policy change.
- Enforce the tobacco policy just as any other policy would be. Provide training in enforcement for supervisors. Do not differentiate between smoking breaks and any other kind of breaks.
- Anticipate unintended effects (e.g., the concentration of smoke in designated areas).
- Continue to provide smoking cessation educational opportunities and programs after the policy has been implemented to support employees in their attempts to quit smoking and to prevent relapse.



## **TOBACCO-FREE WORKSITES -MODEL POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

[Employer] is dedicated to providing a healthy and productive work environment for our employees, customers, and visitors. Tobacco use is a major cause of preventable disease and death.

### **POLICY**

Employees, customers, and visitors cannot use tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, electronic cigarettes, etc.) during work time in any of the following locations:

- All buildings owned or leased
- On company grounds
- Parking lots, including private vehicles parked in the lots
- Company vehicles
- Immediate adjacent city sidewalks surrounding the buildings

### **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to all employees, customers and visitors with appropriate signs at vehicle and pedestrian entrances. Each building owned or leased will display a decal that communicates this is a Tobacco-Free Worksite. Employees will receive additional communications via e-mail, flyers, and other communications. No smoking receptacles and shelters will be provided on company grounds.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

#### *Responsibility of employees*

It is the responsibility for all employees, customers and visitors to be in compliance with the tobacco-free policy. Violations for employees will be handled in the same manner as violations of any other human resources policy. Employees who do not conform to this policy may be subject to disciplinary action and will be reported to their supervisor.

#### *Responsibility of supervisors*

This policy will be enforced through administrative action by supervisors and managers. In general, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees under their direction are aware of the policy and comply with it and for taking appropriate action to correct noncompliance. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees are notified of the new policy and receive a copy of the policy.

#### *Responsibility of all*

Any person who observes violations of the policy may report these violations to the supervisor of the employee in question. Once the employee's supervisor has been notified of a violation, or if the supervisor directly observes a violation by an employee under their direction, the supervisor is responsible for discussing the violation with the employee and taking appropriate disciplinary action.

### **TOBACCO CESSATION**

Employees who have [healthplan] insurance may call [enter phone number] for information regarding the availability of tobacco cessation programs. Employees, who do not have insurance, may contact [alternative vendor]. All employees may review the stop-smoking resources information on our intranet site under [For Employees/Quit Smoking Help].

**The policy shall come into effect on [DATE] and be reviewed on [DATE] by [NAME].**

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