

# HEALTHIER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACES



# BE TOBACCO FREE

T O O L K I T





## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Dear Virginia Employer:

On behalf of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), I would like to congratulate you on your interest in helping provide healthier, more productive workplaces in Virginia. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Virginia. The information in the *Healthier and More Productive Workplaces: Be Tobacco Free* toolkit can help you develop cost-effective policies and supply lifesaving, health improving information for your employees.

Healthy employees also make good business sense. The CDC has reported that tobacco use costs employers an average of \$156 billion in lost productivity and \$133 billion in medical expenses annually. Tobacco free workplaces can enhance productivity by reducing excess tobacco related absenteeism and reduce insurance costs when employees stop using tobacco as a result of workplace policies.

The *Healthier and More Productive Workplaces: Be Tobacco Free* toolkit provides employers with a step-by-step guide for creating a tobacco free worksite policy and encouraging tobacco cessation. It also provides guidelines for getting employee "buy-in" and gives examples of successful model policies that other Virginia businesses have used to their benefit. The toolkit contains resources available for your business and employees.

Together we can build healthier communities by creating a workplace environment that promotes the health and wellbeing of employees and reduces healthcare costs. If you need further information, please contact Gina Roberts, Community Coordinator, Tobacco Use Control Project, by phone at (434) 944-3356 or by e-mail at [Gina.Roberts@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Gina.Roberts@vdh.virginia.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marissa J. Levine".

Marissa J. Levine, MD, MPH, FAAFP  
State Health Commissioner



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# Workplace Toolkit Overview

Adopting a tobacco free workplace policy makes good business sense and provides the following benefits:



- Improve Business
- Lower Costs
- Reduce Absenteeism
- Increase Productivity and Morale
- Protect Employees' Health

The goal of this toolkit is to help employers establish a comprehensive, 100 percent tobacco free workplace environment that will:

- Provide a safe and healthy environment for employees and management
- Protect all employees from exposure to second and third-hand smoke
- Provide cessation support to smokers who want to quit smoking or using tobacco

This guide provides information on how to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive tobacco free policies and related activities. Ideally, to protect all employees from exposure to second and third-hand smoke, companies will implement policies that require a tobacco free environment in company buildings and other enclosed places as well as provide significant smoking cessation support for employees and covered dependents.

The guide provides the background information needed to make the decision to implement policies and related activities that will eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke. It highlights the legal, scientific, human resource, facility, image, and economic reasons to become tobacco free in the workplace.

Included are examples of model tobacco free policies and additional options to help communicate a policy. The toolkit also offers resources for the company to develop smoking cessation activities to ensure help is available for employees who want to quit smoking.

The guide provides step by step instructions for designing policies and related programs to meet the needs of the company, as well as additional resources, health consequences, and other materials to assist in the process of becoming a tobacco free workplace.

# Good Business, Good Health

Prohibiting smoking and eliminating secondhand smoke can have a significant impact on the bottom line. Making simple changes to the work environment improves the health of employees and saves the company money by increasing profitability and productivity and lowering absenteeism and costs.

Corporate leaders know that rising healthcare costs are one of the biggest threats to the bottom line. What is not well-known is the significant role of smoking and other tobacco use in driving these costs. In fact, tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Business bears the burden of tobacco-related illness — and resulting healthcare bills — among employees, family members, and even retirees. Reducing tobacco use and its related costs are critical to optimizing profits and improving worker health and productivity.

## JUST TO NAME A FEW...

Here are just a few examples of some national corporations that have enacted corporate tobacco free and/or smokefree policies:

### NATIONAL CORPORATIONS

- AT&T
- CarMax
- Coca Cola
- CVS Pharmacy  
*CVS does not sell tobacco products in any of its stores*
- Eli Lilly and Company
- General Electric Company (GE)
- General Mills
- IBM
- Johnson & Johnson
- Lowe's Companies Inc.
- Marriot
- MCI Communications
- Merck & Company
- Nordstrom
- Prudential Financial
- State Farm Insurance Company
- Target Corporation -  
*Target does not sell tobacco products in any of its stores*
- Texas Instruments Inc.
- Verizon
- Westin Hotels and Resorts

### MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

- BF Goodrich Tire Manufacturing
- Boeing
- Dow Chemical Company
- DuPont Chemical Company
- Tyson Foods Inc
- Union Pacific

### RESTAURANT CHAINS

- Baskin & Robbins
- Bertucci's Brick Oven Pizza
- Boston Market
- Burger King -  
*Company-owned restaurants only*
- California Pizza Kitchen
- Carl's Jr.
- Chick-Fil-A
- Chuck-E-Cheese
- Church's Chicken
- CiCi's Pizza
- Dairy Queen -  
*Company-owned restaurants only*
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Jack in the Box -  
*Company-owned restaurants only*
- Kentucky Fried Chicken -  
*1,200 company-owned restaurants; franchises encouraged to adopt smokefree policies*
- Long John Silver's -  
*Company-owned restaurants only*
- McDonald's Corporation -  
*Company-owned restaurants only; franchises encouraged to adopt smokefree policies*
- Papa John's
- Pizza Hut - *1,675 company-owned restaurants; franchises encouraged to adopt smokefree policies*
- Popeye's
- Starbucks
- Taco Bell
- Wendy's International Inc. -  
*Company-owned restaurants only; franchises may voluntarily adopt smokefree policies*

# Financial Benefits For Tobacco Free Workplaces

Tobacco free workplaces are the simplest and most cost effective way to improve employee health. Below are the business costs associated with smoke-filled environments according to Americans for Nonsmokers Rights.



## PROFITABILITY

- The Society of Actuaries has determined that secondhand smoke costs the U.S. economy roughly \$10 billion a year: \$5 billion in estimated medical costs associated with secondhand smoke exposure, and another \$4.6 billion in lost wages. This estimate does not include youth exposure to secondhand smoke.
- If all workplaces were to implement 100 percent smokefree policies, the reduction in heart attack rates due to exposure to secondhand smoke would save the United States \$49 million in direct medical savings within the first year alone. Savings would increase over time.
- Smokefree laws add value to establishments. Restaurants in smokefree cities have a higher market value at resale (an average of 16 percent higher) than comparable restaurants located in smoke-filled cities.

## ABSENTEEISM AND LOST PRODUCTIVITY

- The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that smokefree workplace policies lead to less smoking among workers and the elimination of secondhand smoke exposure, thus creating a healthier workforce.
- Smokers, on average, miss 6.16 days of work per year due to sickness (including smoking related acute and chronic conditions), compared to nonsmokers, who miss 3.86 days of work per year.
- In a study of healthcare utilization among 20,831 employees of a single, large employer, employees who smoked had more hospital admissions per 1,000 (124 vs. 76), had a longer average length of stay (6.47 vs. 5.03 days), and made six more visits to healthcare facilities per year than nonsmoking employees.
- A national study based on American Productivity Audit data of the U.S. workforce found that tobacco use was one of the greatest variables observed when determining worker lost production time (LPT)-greater than alcohol consumption, family emergencies, age or education. The study reported that LPT increased in relation to the amount smoked; LPT estimates for workers who reported smoking one pack of cigarettes per day or more was 75 percent higher than that observed for nonsmoking and ex-smoking workers. In addition, employees who smoked had approximately two times more LPT per week than workers who never smoked - a cost equivalent of roughly \$27 billion in productivity losses for employers.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) puts a \$3,391 price tag on each employee who smokes: \$1,760 in lost productivity and \$1,623 in excess medical expenditures. In addition, estimated costs associated with secondhand smoke's effects on nonsmokers can add up to \$490 per smoker per year.

## MAINTENANCE

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- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that smokefree restaurants can expect to save about \$190 per 1,000 square feet each year in lower cleaning and maintenance costs. The EPA also estimates a savings of \$4 billion to \$8 billion per year in building operations and maintenance costs if comprehensive smokefree indoor air policies are adopted nationwide.
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates that renovation and maintenance costs are seven percent higher in buildings that allow smoking than in buildings that are smokefree.
- A 1993 survey of businesses conducted by the Building Owners and Management Association (BOMA) International found that the elimination of smoking from a building reduced cleaning expenses by an average of 10 percent. Smoking was also cited as the number one cause of fires on a BOMA fire safety survey.
- The National Fire Protection Association found that in 2012 smoking materials caused 92,800 fires in non-residential structures resulting in a direct property damage of \$2.4 Billion.
- In a survey of cleaning and maintenance costs among 2,000 companies that adopted smokefree policies, 60 percent reported reduced expenditures.
- After Unigard Insurance, near Seattle, Washington, went smokefree, its maintenance contractor voluntarily reduced its fee by \$500 per month because the cleaning staff no longer had to dump and clean ashtrays, dust desks, or clean carpets as frequently.
- Using U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data, it was determined that employees who smoke cost businesses in Marion County, Indiana, \$260.1 million in increased health insurance premiums, lost productivity, and absenteeism, as well as in additional recruitment and training costs resulting from premature retirement and deaths due to smoking.
- Merle Norman Cosmetics Company in Los Angeles voluntarily went smoke-free and saved \$13,500 the first year in reduced housekeeping costs.

## INSURANCE RATES

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- Landlords and restaurants with smoke-free premises have negotiated lower fire and property insurance premiums. Fire insurance is commonly reduced 25-30 percent in smoke-free businesses.
- The American Cancer Society reports that employees who smoke have an average insurance payment for healthcare of \$1,145, while nonsmoking employees average \$762.

# Consider the Health Consequences

Policies establishing tobacco free environments are the most effective way to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke. Evidence has shown that tobacco free policies in enclosed workplace settings are associated with reduced daily cigarette consumption among employees and possibly with increased cessation among employees.

Tobacco use harms virtually every organ in the body, causing multiple cancers, heart disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and numerous other ailments. It's no surprise then that tobacco-related illness results in almost \$100 billion in healthcare costs each and every year, and business bears much of that burden. Private insurance pays for nearly 50 percent of smoking related medical costs for people ages 19-64.

Even though they live significantly shorter lives, tobacco users on average incur \$15,000 to \$17,000 more in lifetime healthcare expense than nonsmokers.

Of course, the worst cost is human life. Tobacco use kills more than 440,000 Americans every year, and smoking cuts lives short by an average of 12 to 14 years. Half of long-term tobacco users become ill and die of tobacco-related illnesses in middle age.

## *WHAT ARE THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SMOKING?*

Every exposure to the cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco smoke can damage DNA in a way that leads to cancer. Exposure to secondhand smoke has an immediate adverse impact on the cardiovascular system, damaging blood vessels, making blood more likely to clot, and increasing risks for heart attack and stroke. A person doesn't have to be a heavy smoker or a long-time smoker to get a smoking-related disease or have a heart attack or asthma attack that is triggered by tobacco smoke. Even low levels of smoke exposure, including exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke, lead to a rapid and sharp increase in dysfunction and inflammation of the lining of the blood vessels, which are implicated in heart attacks and stroke.



## *MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY*

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- Results in premature death
- Causes significant disease and disability

## *CARDIOVASCULAR EFFECTS*

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- Coronary heart disease
- Cerebrovascular disease (stroke)
- Atherosclerotic peripheral vascular disease

## *CANCER*

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- Lung cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Laryngeal cancer
- Renal cancer
- Cancer of the oral cavity (lip, tongue, mouth, and pharynx)
- Esophageal cancer
- Bladder cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Associated with gastric cancer

## *LUNG DISEASE*

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- Chronic bronchitis
- Emphysema

## *WOMEN'S HEALTH EFFECTS*

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- Intrauterine growth retardation, leading to low-birth-weight babies
- Associated with miscarriages

## *OTHER HEALTH EFFECTS*

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- Addiction to nicotine
- Adverse interactions with occupational hazards that increase the risk of cancer
- Alteration of the actions and effects of prescription and nonprescription medicines
- Probable cause of peptic ulcer disease
- Macular Degeneration of the eye

## *HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SECONDHAND SMOKE*

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- Lung cancer in nonsmokers
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in nonsmokers
- Associated with higher death rates from cardiovascular disease in nonsmokers
- In children, associated with respiratory tract infections, increase prevalence of fluid in the middle ear, additional episodes of asthma, increased severity of symptoms in children with asthma, and a risk factor for new onset of asthma in children who have not previously displayed symptoms
- Associated with increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Associated with increased irritant effects, particularly eye irritation, among allergic persons

# Creating a Tobacco Free Workplace

Employers concerned about their employees may be able to improve their health and help them be more productive by creating tobacco free workplaces. Many state and local governments now require workplaces to be tobacco free. Both smoking and non-smoking employees may be helped by such policies.



## *BENEFITS OF A TOBACCO FREE WORKPLACE*

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### **For the Employees**

- A tobacco free environment helps create a safer, healthier workplace.
- Workers who are bothered by smoke will not be exposed to it at work.
- Smokers who want to quit may have more of a reason to do so.
- Smokers may appreciate a clear company policy about smoking at work.
- Managers are relieved when there is a clearly defined process for dealing with smoking in the workplace.

### **For the Employer**

- A tobacco free environment helps create a safer, healthier workplace.
- Direct healthcare costs to the company may be reduced.
- A clear plan that is carefully put into action by the employer to lower employees' exposure to secondhand smoke shows the company cares.
- Employees may be less likely to miss work due to smoking-related illnesses.
- Maintenance costs go down when smoke, matches, and cigarette butts are taken out of work facilities.
- Office equipment, carpets, and furniture last longer.
- The risk of fire is lowered.

# Ten Steps to Implement a Tobacco Free Workplace Policy

The 2010 Surgeon General's Report provides scientific findings about cigarettes and how quickly they can damage the human body; and it indicates that tobacco companies have altered their products to make them more addictive. The report states there is NO safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. Only 100 percent tobacco free policies fully protect workers' health. Here are steps to help implement a smokefree or tobacco free policy.

1. **Establish a policy work group** to develop the plan. Engage employees, including smokers, nonsmokers, and former smokers. Be sure to include representatives from different departments and recognized employee organizations (e.g., union, safety, and employees committee). Assign one or more senior managers to implement the new policy. A formal work group creates the structure needed to develop an action plan and makes a clear statement that smoking and/or other tobacco use is an issue that is being taken seriously by senior management. It also indicates that the issue of smoking and/or tobacco use is a priority in the organization.

A typical work group may include representatives from:

- Senior management
- Occupational health
- Human resource management
- Safety/security officers
- Trades unions (if applicable)
- Employees (where possible, try to obtain representation from high-risk occupations and culturally diverse employees representative of specific worksites)

Small companies may not have the staff to form formal work groups. Nonetheless, every effort should be made to gather employee and manager input as a policy is developed.

2. **Gather information from staff and clients.** Convene focus groups or informal meetings with your staff/clients to gauge thoughts and feelings about a tobacco free worksite. Opening the lines of communication early in the process is essential to maintain good relations. Some companies may want to conduct a survey to assess the level of support for a tobacco free workplace.
3. **Create a plan and implementation timeline** with preparation steps, the announcement date, interim steps, and opportunities to review the policy and process. You can use the Tobacco Free Policy Checklist on page 23 to create your plan.
4. **Announce policy.** Chief Executive Officer should announce the policy to all employees in a meeting or in a letter.
5. **Communicate often.** Effective communication of a new or revised policy is crucial in order to win initial support and ensure sustainability. When people are asked to change significant behaviors, they respond best if they understand why a change is necessary. Providing employees with education and opportunities to be involved with the implementation process will facilitate compliance with the new tobacco free policy. The emphasis of communication should focus on protection of employee health and safety.

# Ten Steps to Implement a Tobacco Free Workplace Policy

The Chief Executive Officer or similar high-profile officer should announce the plan to demonstrate that it is a priority issue. The approach you select to inform your employees that a new or revised policy is being implemented will depend on the size of your organization and the amount of education needed. It is important to educate employees about the hazards of secondhand smoke before introducing a policy so they understand the rationale for the policy.



## The following are some ways to inform employees of the new policy:

- Intranet
- Payroll inserts (brochures, relevant articles, flyers)
- Closed-circuit television
- Regular articles in the company newsletter
- Posters, displays, buttons
- Presentations
- Speakers
- Information kits
- Brown bag lunches
- Employee orientations

6. **Continue educational efforts beyond just the initial implementation period.** Employees will benefit from continual reminders of the policy, consequences for violating the policy, and available resources to help them quit using tobacco.
7. **Transform the environment** by removing ashtrays and cigarette vending machines and installing “Tobacco Free Worksite” or “No Smoking” signs in prominent places.
8. **Enforce the policy.** Determine early who will be responsible for enforcement and make sure they have the full authority to maintain compliance. A well-written policy should be very clear on the consequences for violating the policy. Consequences should be similar to those for violations of similar types of organizational policies.
9. **Provide and promote effective cessation treatment,** including counseling and medications at little or no cost. Voice and demonstrate a commitment to support smokers and tobacco users who want to quit, understanding that quitting is a process that can take multiple attempts with a variety of strategies.

# Ten Steps to Implement a Tobacco Free Workplace Policy

10. **Periodically evaluate and refine the policy.** Now that the policy is in place, how is it working? Consider developing a plan to monitor how your policy is being implemented and evaluate the results. With this information, you can strengthen your policy and increase its effectiveness and impact over time.



## EVALUATION CHECKLIST:

- Have staff members been informed about the policy and been instructed about how to support the tobacco free policy? Determine the amount of knowledge they have through a survey assessment.
- Is signage prominently displayed? Take pictures of signage for reference.
- Have staff/employees effectively addressed violations of the policy? How many violations do you have a month?
- Were conflicts anticipated and handled appropriately? Document dates of conflicts.
- Are there resources available at company, agency, or organization offices for those who want to quit using tobacco products?
- Has tobacco-related litter noticeably decreased? Conduct observational assessments of smoking and littering. If necessary, increase signage on receptacles or other areas where litter is still a problem.

# Tobacco Free Policies versus Smokefree Policies

It is important to adopt the appropriate tobacco free and smokefree policies that will meet the business or company needs. To ensure the best fit and provide the greatest impact, it is important to understand the different options that are available. The difference between these policies are described below.

## OPTIONS?

When it comes to tobacco use, half-measures like designated smoking areas won't get you where you want to go. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. Only 100 percent tobacco free policies fully protect workers' health. Tobacco free policies also offer the greatest support to tobacco users who are trying to quit. Tobacco use policies can take one of two forms:

**100 percent tobacco free in all indoor and outdoor areas, including company vehicles:** Tobacco users must leave company property to use any tobacco product, including smokeless tobacco. This is often called a comprehensive tobacco free campus policy. The Virginia Department of Health recommends the comprehensive, 100 percent tobacco free approach.

**100 percent smokefree in all indoor areas, including company vehicles:** Smoking is restricted within a specified distance, typically a minimum of 25 feet, of entrances, windows, and ventilation intakes to prevent smoke from drifting back into the building.

### *MINIMUM POLICY:*

A Smokefree Workplace policy meets the requirement to comply with minimal restrictions on clean indoor air regulations. It provides workers safe work environments and eliminates employer liability of secondhand smoke exposure by prohibiting tobacco smoking inside buildings, offices, and bathrooms. However, designated smoking areas with cigarette butt receptacles that are placed near entrances or exits can encourage smokers to congregate and continue smoking. Public display of tobacco use can create a negative image to nonsmoking employees, visitors, and clientele.

### *BETTER POLICY:*

A Tobacco Free Workplace policy prohibits use of any tobacco use in all work areas, bathrooms, company vehicle, or private offices. This policy eliminates the use of all tobacco products including spit tobacco, chew, or snus at the worksite. This type of policy discourages smokers from becoming dual product tobacco users to maintain nicotine use during work.

### *GOOD POLICY:*

A Smokefree Campus policy prohibits smoking while on all company property and in company vehicles. This policy eliminates the opportunity for smokers to congregate at designated smoking areas, thus increasing productivity. Smoking litter found on the grounds, in parking lots, and around receptacles is prevented. Secondhand smoke exposure is eliminated. However it does not eliminate other tobacco products allowing smokers to substitute spit tobacco or similar products to address nicotine cravings.

### *BEST POLICY:*

A Tobacco Free Campus policy prohibits use of all tobacco products on all company property, including buildings, parking areas, common grounds, and vehicles. Use of tobacco products within employee vehicles on company property is also prohibited. Signage on exterior grounds communicates the policy to all employees, visitors, consultants, clients, and vendors. This is the MOST COMPREHENSIVE tobacco control policy.

# Policy Principles

## *EFFECTIVE POLICIES ARE CLEARLY STATED AND INCLUDE:*

- Purpose of policy
- Products covered under policy (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cigar, etc.)
- Definition of how the policy applies to employees, visitors, and others
- Physical boundaries of policy (e.g., private vehicles, company equipment, etc.)
- Support to help employees comply, including cessation services
- Clear enforcement rules and consequences
- Contact person who can answer questions and address concerns
- Policy review process

## *KEY PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TOBACCO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:*

- Focus on smoke, not the smoker
- Focus on health and safety regarding secondhand smoke, not individual rights
- Ensure that restrictions and enforcement are equitable across job categories; treat all workers fairly, regardless of title or tobacco use status
- Obtain and communicate management commitment and support
- 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 secondhand smoke 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)
- Offer smoking cessation programs to all employees and their families before and after the policy change
- Enforce the tobacco policy as would be appropriate for any other policy. 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

# Glossary of Terms

<b>CAMPUS</b>	The buildings and grounds that support the work of a company.
<b>CESSATION</b>	To discontinue the use of tobacco products.
<b>E-CIGARETTE</b>	A device used to simulate the experience of smoking, having a cartridge with a heater that vaporizes liquid nicotine instead of burning tobacco.
<b>NRT-Nicotine Replacement Therapy</b>	The medically therapeutic administration of nicotine to the body by means other than tobacco.
<b>POLICY</b>	The plan that outlines the goals and standard procedures of a company.
<b>QUITLINE</b>	A phone-based counseling and coaching program to assist people who want to quit tobacco use. Quit Now:1-800-784-8669
<b>SECONDHAND SMOKE</b>	Smoke that is dispersed into the atmosphere from burning tobacco products or exhaled by a smoker (also known as side-stream smoke). According to the 2010 Surgeon General’s report, this smoke contains 7,000 chemicals.
<b>SPIT / CHEW TOBACCO</b>	These products are referred to as chew, dip, plug, smokeless, snuff, and spit tobacco and are available in various forms. A mixture of tobacco, sweeteners, various particles, and salts, they contain hundreds of chemicals that are poisonous to the human body. These forms of tobacco are placed in the mouth between the cheek and gums to release nicotine into the bloodstream.
<b>THIRD-HAND SMOKE</b>	Reference to the particles remaining on surfaces after the secondhand smoke clears.
<b>TOBACCO DEPENDENCE</b>	The addiction to nicotine products, including cigarettes, cigars, spit/chew, snuff, snus (pouch), orbs (mints), sticks (toothpicks), and strips (dissolvable).
<b>TOBACCO USE</b>	Smoking, chewing, dipping, or any other use of tobacco products.
<b>WORKPLACE / WORKSITE</b>	The place where employees report to work, including buildings, parking lots, company vehicles, and the grounds where the company is located. It can also include off campus areas such as construction sites and off-site work related activities.

# Frequently Asked Questions on Tobacco Policy Issues

## *WHY IS A TOBACCO FREE WORKSITE IMPORTANT?*

- Helps employees and visitors quit tobacco.
- Reduces nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Tobacco in all forms (smoking, smokeless, and secondhand smoke) kills.
- Continuing to allow tobacco use represents a liability. The employer has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- Tobacco policies save costs associated with absenteeism, smoke breaks, life insurance, and healthcare.

## *DOES AN EMPLOYER HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT A TOBACCO FREE POLICY?*

- Employers are free to set policies and implement restrictions that are necessary to provide a safe and healthy working environment.
- The courts have consistently upheld the constitutionality of policies that restrict or prohibit smoking in the workplace.

## *WHY SHOULD THIS POLICY COVER SMOKELESS TOBACCO?*

- There is no safe tobacco product.
- The spitting involved with smokeless products is unsanitary and a possible vehicle of disease.

## *WILL THIS POLICY AFFECT PATRONAGE TO COMPANY SERVICES?*

- Continuing to allow tobacco use may impact patronage, especially if complaints have been received.
- Most company patrons, and most Virginians in general, do not use tobacco.

## *DO PEOPLE HAVE THE "RIGHT" TO USE TOBACCO?*

- Smoking is a privilege. "Right to smoke" claims have been consistently rejected by the courts.
- The right of access to facilities is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act for those with breathing and other disorders.
- Secondhand smoke policies prevent ex-smokers and nonsmokers from being exposed to the toxic substances in secondhand smoke.

## *DO TOBACCO FREE POLICIES INFRINGE ON A PERSON'S PRIVATE DECISION?*

- Smokefree policies do not restrict smokers from smoking. They simply restrict smoking at the worksite.
- Secondhand smoke policies respect the basic right to breathe smokefree air for smokers and nonsmokers alike.
- An employer has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

## *INSTEAD OF A POLICY, SHOULDN'T NONSMOKERS JUST CHOOSE NOT TO COME AROUND SMOKERS?*

- Due to the nature of secondhand smoke, this does not adequately protect nonsmokers. A policy keeps nonsmokers from being involuntarily exposed.
- An employer has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees and visitors.
- There are certain areas that nonsmokers cannot avoid, such as public entrances.

## *WHAT'S WRONG WITH SMOKING OUTSIDE? DOESN'T THE AIR DILUTE THE SMOKE?*

- According to research on secondhand smoke, particle concentrations in outdoor settings in some cases can be comparable to those in indoor settings.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke outdoors can adversely affect the health of persons with respiratory illnesses.

# Samples of a Tobacco Free Policy

## SAMPLE 1

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Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, it shall be the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ to provide a tobacco free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking and/or use of any tobacco product (including cigars and e-cigarettes) and the use of oral tobacco products or “spit” tobacco, and it applies to both employees and non-employee visitors of \_\_\_\_\_.

### DEFINITION

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#### 1. No smoking of tobacco products will be allowed within the facilities at any time.

The decision to provide or not provide designated smoking areas outside the building will be at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

The designated smoking area will be located at least 25 feet from the main entrance. (Some companies may want to establish a larger smokefree zone, choose a different location for smoking, or have no smoking on their property.)

All materials used for smoking in this area, including cigarette butts and matches, will be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers. Supervisors will ensure periodic cleanup of the designated smoking area. If the designated smoking area is not properly maintained (for example, if cigarette butts are found on the ground), it can be eliminated at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

(For a policy that extends smokefree to include all of the company property, substitute the following: No smoking of tobacco products are permitted within the facilities or on the property of \_\_\_\_\_ at any time.)

#### 2. No smoking in any company vehicle.

There will be no smoking in \_\_\_\_\_ vehicles at any time.

There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting persons on \_\_\_\_\_ authorized business.

#### 3. Breaks.

Supervisors will discuss the issue of taking breaks with their staff, both smokers and non-smokers. Together they will develop effective solutions that do not interfere with the productivity of the staff.

### PROCEDURE

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1. Employees will be informed of this policy through signs posted in \_\_\_\_\_ facilities and vehicles, newsletters, inserts in pay envelopes, the policy manual, e-mail, and/or orientation and training provided by their supervisors.
2. Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs, and it will be explained by their hosts.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ will help employees who want to quit smoking by helping them access recommended smoking cessation programs and materials.
4. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.

( This model policy is adapted from Making Your Workplace Smoke-free: A Decision Maker’s Guide, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Cancer Society, and the Wellness Councils of America. The full guide is available online at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/secondhand\\_smoke/guides/workplace/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/guides/workplace/) )

# Samples of a Tobacco Free Policy

## SAMPLE 2

### [COMPANY]'S Letterhead

[COMPANY]'S Tobacco free POLICY

Effective [DATE], [COMPANY] is implementing a campus-wide tobacco free policy for all employees, customers, and visitors in order to provide a clean, healthy, productive, and safe environment for all.

#### *I. POLICY*

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**This policy is in effect during and after work hours and will apply to:**

- All [COMPANY] employees on all shifts;
- Customers, vendors, clients, consultants, contractors, and all other visitors; and
- Members of committees, including our Board of Directors.

Smoking and tobacco use of any kind will be prohibited on all [COMPANY] owned and/or leased locations/premises; all internal and external areas, parking garages, and parking lots; all entrances and exits; and all company owned and/or leased vehicles.

Additionally, the policy will be in place at all company sponsored events—both on our premises and at external locations. Employees who choose to use tobacco products must do so on their regularly scheduled breaks or meal periods and off company property.

No ashtrays are permitted in any indoor or outdoor area on company premises.

#### *II. PROCEDURE*

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Copies of this policy shall be distributed to all current and future employees, posted on the premises and available for inspection upon request.

[COMPANY] shall not discharge, refuse to hire, or in any manner retaliate against an employee, applicant, or customer who exercises any rights afforded by this policy, or anyone who reports or attempts to prosecute a violation of this policy.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory and policy violations by employees will be subject to the standard disciplinary actions of the company.

Any disputes involving the policy should be handled through the company's established procedures for resolving other work-related problems. If the problem persists, an employee can speak to [NAME OF APPROPRIATE WORKPLACE CONTACT] at extension \_\_\_\_\_, or the [AGENCY OR HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONTACT ENFORCING LAW] at \_\_\_\_\_.

## QUIT NOW VIRGINIA

Cessation services for the residents of Virginia

QUITNOW.NET/VIRGINIA

1-800-QUIT NOW / 1-800-784-8669

Spanish number/1-855-DEJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569)

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease in the United States. It accounts for about 443,000 deaths each year, or about 20 percent of all deaths - some 50,000 of them from secondhand smoke.

### *ACCORDING TO THE CDC SMOKING CESSATION FACT SHEET:*

- Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States. Research suggests that nicotine may be as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol
- Nicotine is the psychoactive drug in tobacco products that produces dependence. Most smokers are dependent on nicotine
- Nicotine withdrawal symptoms may include irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and increased appetite
- One of the most difficult things to do is to quit using tobacco; often it takes several attempts. Users often relapse because of stress, weight gain, and withdrawal symptoms

Help is as close as a phone or computer. Trained Quit Coaches are ready to help callers set a quit date, make a quit plan and support callers to gain a tobacco free life!

Evidence also indicates that quitlines can help to expand the use of evidence-based services by tobacco users in populations that historically have had the most limited access to and use of evidence-based cessation treatments.

### *QUIT NOW VIRGINIA SERVICES:*

- Available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week
- Provided by trained Quit Coaches
- One-on-one cessation assistance is provided
- Service provided to all Virginians, ages 13 – adult
- TTY service available for the hearing impaired
- Counseling available in English and Spanish
- Interpretation services are available for many other languages
- Tailored services for pregnant women and youth
- All calls are free and confidential

# Cessation Messaging to Employees

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease in the United States. It accounts for about 443,000 deaths each year, or about 20 percent of all deaths - some 50,000 of them from secondhand smoke.

## *PREPARE KEY MESSAGES*

- Help makes a difference.
- Help is available (through benefits or services.)

Smokers want to learn about the kinds of help that can be provided. Make this a key part of the message when implementing a smokefree or tobacco free policy.

## *PROVIDE INFORMATION*

Provide other helpful information, such as:

- Brochures about the Virginia Tobacco Quit Line (Quit Now Virginia) which provides a free telephone and web-based consultation for people trying to quit, and
- Referrals to other cessation services offered by various health plans.

## *USE ENCOURAGING AND HOPEFUL MESSAGES*

Don't forget the power of storytelling. Success stories of employees who have quit smoking can motivate others to try. Feature these employees in publications and other venues.

## *TIMING IS EVERYTHING*

People are ready to quit at different times, and the average smoker tries several times before quitting which can be discouraging for smokers, their families, their co-workers, and their employers. A person who resumes smoking after trying to quit may be discouraged from trying again. That is why it's important to assure people that help is available when they are ready to quit.

Common sense, research, and testimony from smokers and former smokers tell us they are not likely to quit until they are ready. Thus, accessible information about how to get help can catch a smoker when he or she is prepared to quit. Employers are well positioned to provide this information.

Employees need to be kept well-informed about changes to company policy, changes to health plan coverage, and the availability of services to help them quit tobacco use. The approaches used to get the word out will depend on the size of the organization and the amount of education needed. Different methods may be needed for different groups of employees

## *THREE STEP PROCESS TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO QUIT*

1. **ASK:** Identify tobacco use.
2. **ADVISE:** Talk with employee about tobacco use and the benefits of quitting.
3. **REFER:** Refer patient to Quit Now Virginia by providing a quitline brochure.

## Tobacco Free Workplaces and the Law



A summary of Federal and Virginia laws regarding tobacco control is available from the Virginia Department of Health, Tobacco Use Control Project. Check the link below:

**[vdhlivewell.com/tobacco/law](http://vdhlivewell.com/tobacco/law)**

# Tobacco Free Policy Checklist

Here is a quick and easy checklist to follow as you implement your tobacco free policy.

## Four months from the date you want to go tobacco free:

- Organize a committee to collect background on the impact to the employees.
- Make presentations on the benefits and reasons for this change.
- Begin posting flyers and posters to help educate employees about the need to be tobacco free.
- Gather input from the employees.

## Three months from the date you want to go tobacco free:

- Draft a tobacco free policy and communicate with employees about the policy (use e-mail, employee meetings, employee bulletin boards, employee newsletters).
- Make any policy revisions needed after employees give their input.

## Two months from the date you want to go tobacco free:

- Print and post the tobacco free policy, highlighting the implementation date.
- Promote tobacco cessation resources.
- Provide in-service training to management and other key employees.

## One month from the date you want to go tobacco free:

- Put up prominent tobacco free signage.

## On Implementation Day:

- Remove all ashtrays.
- Implement and enforce the policy.
- GO TOBACCO FREE.

## After you have gone tobacco free:

- Follow-up with employees and evaluate the success of your tobacco free policy.
- Continue to promote tobacco cessation resources.
- Be positive with all employees.
- Enforce the policy vigorously.







## Tobacco Use Control Project

The Virginia Department of Health, Tobacco Use Control Project's (TUCP) mission is to provide comprehensive tobacco use control, which empowers Virginia citizens to become full participants in healthy lifestyle choices. Funding for this project is provided through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health. TUCP provides training, information, materials and other mechanisms to support the implementation of policies to help Virginians choose and maintain tobacco free lifestyles.

### Contact Information:

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[VDHLiveWell.com/tobacco/toolkit](http://VDHLiveWell.com/tobacco/toolkit)

Virginia Department of Health  
Office of Family Health Services  
Tobacco Use Control Project (TUCP)