

# Tobacco Free Parklands Toolkit



**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH

**Quit Now**  
Virginia

Tobacco User Quitline



# Tobacco Free Parklands Toolkit

This comprehensive toolkit includes information, tools, and samples to implement effective procedures to promote tobacco free parklands and recreation areas. This toolkit will assist parks, trails, and recreation areas in developing policies to ensure all forms of tobacco use are prohibited where children play and families assemble for leisure and fun.

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## Contents

Program Description	2
Health Regions and Districts	3
Five Easy Steps to Engage Your Community	4
Why Tobacco Free Parklands?	5
Managing Resistance	6
Media Announcement	7
Policy Form	8
Post Signs	10
Signage and Resource Order Form	11
Quit Now Virginia	12
Additional Information	13

# Program Description

The Virginia Department of Health’s Tobacco Control Program (TCP) and its partner agencies invite you to take part in eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke at parks, trails, and recreation areas. Policy initiatives are the key to influencing community behavior and are an effective way to limit exposure to secondhand smoke. Tobacco Free Parklands protect the environment and the health of all park users.

## How Do I Join Tobacco Free Parklands?

1. Implement a 100% tobacco free policy in public areas where people participate in recreational activities.
2. Create a communications plan to inform the public.
3. Request Tobacco Free Parklands signs to install at designated areas.

TCP Regional Coordinators are available for support and technical assistance. The staff are happy to help in planning and can provide resources such as sample policies and press releases to notify the surrounding community and media.

## Tobacco Free Parklands Signs

TCP will provide up to four Tobacco Free Parklands reflective aluminum signs, free of charge, for you to place in your tobacco free areas. Your facility will be listed on the Tobacco Free Parklands “Honor Roll” to recognize your effort in making your facility a healthier place for the community.

[Click here to download and print additional signs.](#)



18"

12"

# Health Regions and Districts

## Northwest Region

Blue Ridge Central Shenandoah	Lord Fairfax Rappahannock	Rappahannock - Rapidan
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## Northern Region

Alexandria Arlington	Fairfax Loudoun	Prince William
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## Southwest Region

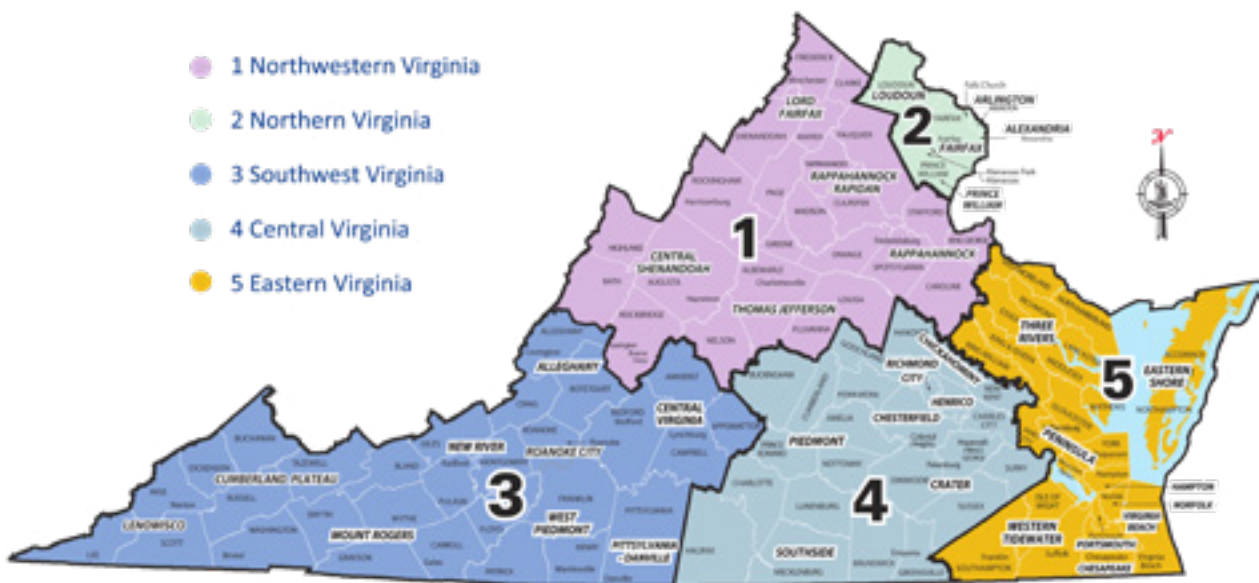
Alleghany Central Virginia Cumberland Plateau	Lenowisco Mount Rogers New River	Pittsylvania - Danville Roanoke West Piedmont
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## Central Region

Chesterfield Chickahominy	Crater Henrico	Piedmont Richmond City Southside
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## Eastern Region

Chesapeake Eastern Shore Hampton	Norfolk Peninsula Portsmouth	Three Rivers Virginia Beach Western Tidewater
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## 5 Easy Steps to Engage Your Community

- Garner participation from recreation, parks, youth organizations, schools, and municipalities.
- Educate community leaders and decision makers about the facts. Provide resources, information, and support.
- Implement 100% tobacco free parks, playgrounds, and athletic field policies.
- Request Tobacco Free Parklands signs (free of charge).
- Inform your staff and community. Publish and promote an announcement in the local media.



# Why Tobacco Free Parklands?

Virginia communities are adopting tobacco free parkland policies, demonstrating commitment to healthy and safe environments by prohibiting tobacco use and eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke at parks, trails, playgrounds, and athletic fields. Tobacco free policies include all forms of tobacco including smokeless and electronic tobacco products.

## Tobacco Free Parklands Are Clean Parklands

Cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world. Discarded cigarettes and other forms of tobacco are hazardous to the environment and costly to clean up. When washed into creeks and streams, tobacco waste is a toxic pollutant that does not decompose easily — it takes decades! Small children and animals are at risks of swallowing, choking, and burning themselves with discarded butts and poisoning themselves with nicotine. Tobacco waste makes parks, trails, and playgrounds look unkempt and uninviting to users. Tobacco free parks provide clean and healthy places to enjoy the outdoors. Parks, trails, playgrounds, and athletic fields should represent healthy activity, natural beauty, and clean air. Using tobacco does not encourage healthy life styles nor demonstrate healthy behaviors.

## Children Suffer From Secondhand Smoke

Exposure to secondhand smoke results in more than 41,000 deaths in the United States and over one million illnesses in children annually.

There is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure. A lit cigarette contains over 7,000 chemicals, 250 are known to be harmful to the human body, and 70 are known to cause cancer. Children exposed to secondhand smoke inhale many of the same cancer-causing substances as smokers. Even brief exposures can be harmful.

One-hundred percent smokefree environments are the only way to protect children from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

## Children Imitate Adult Behaviors

Children learn by watching us. When children see adults using tobacco in family-friendly places such as parks and playgrounds they learn that particular behavior is acceptable. Every year in Virginia, nearly 3,100 children under the age of 18 will become new daily smokers.

## Virginians Support Tobacco Free Outdoor Areas

The majority of Virginians (86%) do not smoke. Tobacco Free initiatives restrict tobacco use where people enjoy the outdoors and help protect the health of park visitors.

Adequate signage provides an opportunity to educate the community about the tobacco free initiative. The vast majority of the time, tobacco free policies are self-enforcing. The most important step in ensuring compliance with a new tobacco free policy is to alert all members of the community.

Supporting tobacco free programs and initiatives will make a difference in the health and welfare of the entire community. Your help is needed to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke at outdoor public places.

# Managing Resistance

Below are examples of how one might respond to comments or concerns regarding the new policy.

## Examples

**Concern:** Recreation and Parks staff are concerned restrictions of tobacco use will discourage people from using the parks, particularly rented facilities.

**Response:** Most Virginians do not use tobacco and most Virginians support tobacco free areas for children. Tobacco use in playgrounds and public areas challenges the intended use of the area, which it is to promote healthy and safe activities for all members of the community.

**Concern:** Taxpayers have a right to use and enjoy these outdoor areas as they like. People use these public spaces to relax and they need a place to smoke outdoors.

**Response:** Ask the advisory board if they currently have a policy to prohibit alcohol use in parks and playgrounds. Alcohol, like tobacco is another legal drug. Invite the advisory board to implement the same enforcement policy currently used to limit alcohol to the new tobacco policy.

Tobacco Free Parklands is a self-enforced initiative; patrons by and large are found to comply with posted signage. The signs are reflective aluminum and include information to support those who want to quit.



# Media Announcement

Name Kicks Off Tobacco Free Parklands Initiative

Visiting your local playground or recreational field may soon be a more enjoyable experience without cigarette butts littering the ground or the smell of tobacco smoke or aerosol from electronic smoking devices polluting the air.

Name is proud to announce the Tobacco Free Parklands initiative in promoting tobacco free and smokefree public parks and playgrounds.

Tobacco Free Parklands aims to eliminate exposure to the secondhand smoke and aerosols at public parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas by educating the community and local agencies about the harms of secondhand smoke and assisting them with the creation and implementation of tobacco free policies.

Name worked with the Virginia Department of Health Tobacco Control Program to promote tobacco free parks and community spaces through this initiative.

Each year an estimated 41,000 Americans die from diseases attributable to secondhand smoke exposure, which also causes an estimated one million illnesses in children. The Surgeon General reports there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Evidence show 100% smokefree environments are the only effective way to protect people from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, which puts children at particular risk for asthma, respiratory infections, and cardiovascular disease.

Outdoor tobacco use has an environmental impact as well. Cigarette butts are one the most littered items in the world. Tobacco waste is costly to clean up and has the potential to poison waterways, animals, and people.

We are proud to have the opportunity to participate with Name to promote the health and wellbeing of our communities.

For more information about Tobacco Free Parklands, contact: [Information for Local Point of Contact](#).

EDITORS: Contact's Name, Phone, and Email at:

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# Policy Form

## GUIDELINE STATEMENT

The *Name* Parks and Recreation Department's 100% Tobacco Free Policy is designed to protect the health and safety of our parks and its patrons.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The *Name* Recreation and Parks Department is committed to providing a healthy environment and quality of living for all residents.

### We believe that:

1. Tobacco products used in proximity of children, youth, and adults engaging in or watching recreational activities are unhealthy for the user and detrimental to the health of others.
2. Tobacco products consumed in public spaces are often improperly discarded as litter and pose risks for children, animals, and the environment.
3. Parents, volunteers, and coaches are role models for our children, and the use of tobacco products around youth has a negative effect on their future lifestyle choices.

## TOBACCO FREE FACILITIES

The *Name* Recreation and Parks Department does not allow the use of tobacco products including electronic smoking devices on publicly owned parklands, park facilities, open spaces, or jointly used school district properties.

## (Policy Form page 2)

### COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

The Tobacco Free Park policy is self-enforcing. It is encouraged that publicly owned parklands, park facilities, open spaces, or jointly used school district properties do the following:

1. Name will post Tobacco Free Parklands signage.
2. Name Recreation and Parks staff will meet with organizations, volunteers, and coaches to discuss the policy and distribute flyers with the tobacco free policy.
3. Name Recreation and Parks staff will make periodic observations of activity sites to monitor compliance and help to promote awareness of the tobacco free policy.

### DEFINITION OF “TOBACCO PRODUCT”:

- a) Any product containing, made, or derived from, tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff ; and
- b) Any electronic device that delivers nicotine or other substances to the person inhaling from the device, including but not limited to cigars, pipes, or hookahs, or electronic cigarettes, tanks, or pods.
- c) Notwithstanding any provision of subsections (a) and (b) to the contrary, “tobacco product” includes any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product, whether or not sold separately. “Tobacco product” does not include any product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as a tobacco cessation product or for other therapeutic purposes where such product is marketed and sold for such a purpose.

Policy Adoption Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Post Signs

Suggested locations for signs:

- Fencing around playgrounds and fields
- Restrooms
- Parking lot entrances
- Lifeguard stands
- Picnic shelters
- Concession stands
- Beach entrances
- Hiking trail entrances
- Bleachers



# Tobacco Free Parklands Signage and Resource Order Form

**Contact Information** (please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

[Click here to download and print additional signs.](#)



1.



2.

**Quantity:**

1.  Welcome to Our Tobacco Free Parklands sign (English) \_\_\_\_\_ (max 4)

2.  Quit Now brochure (English) 100 per pkg \_\_\_\_\_ (max 2)

3.  Quit Now brochure (Spanish) 100 per pkg \_\_\_\_\_ (max 2)

4.  Quit Now palm/business cards 100 per pkg \_\_\_\_\_ (max 2)



3.



4.

Send completed form to:

Rita.Miller@vdh.virginia.gov or 804-864-7205 (fax)

Please allow up 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Date filled \_\_\_\_\_

# Quit Now Virginia

Tobacco User Quitline

**1-800-QUIT-NOW**

**(1-800-784-8669)**

**TTY 1-800-332-8615**

**Quitnow.net/Virginia**

This service provides free support and advice from experienced counselors, a personalized quit plan, self-help materials, the latest information about cessation medications, and more.

## Who Should Call The Quitline?

- Anyone interested in quitting smoking, smokeless tobacco, or electronic smoking devices.
- Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.
- Anyone who would like information to help family, friends, or coworkers quit using tobacco products.

# Additional Information

Tobacco Free Parklands is sponsored by the  
**Virginia Department of Health's**

[Tobacco Control Program](#)

For more information on  
the impact of tobacco and tobacco free living:

## **Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids**

[The Toll of Tobacco in Virginia](#)

## **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[Smoking & Tobacco Use](#)

[Youth Tobacco Prevention](#)

# Quit Now Virginia

Tobacco User Quitline

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