

Tobacco Free Organizational Policies Key Messages

About Key Messages

Key messages should serve as the foundation for all of your communications. They tell the audience the facts about your issue and articulate why it should matter to them.

Key messages are the essence of the points you need to make, supported by evidence and illustrated with examples. They are not narrative copy for brochures, websites, and the like. Rather, they should be woven into your outreach materials, advertising, presentations and personal conversations whenever possible. Incorporating local information and data will make these messages even stronger and more relevant to key decision makers in an organization.

You should refer to this document throughout the entire policy campaign process as you educate people about the problem and build support for the solution – implementing tobacco-free organizational policies. These messages should be used to create talking points, fact sheets, website copy and other informational/educational items. Please note: This document is not a fact sheet and should not be disseminated to the public or policymakers.

If you have any questions about how to use these messages, contact Allison Nipert at SE2, STEPP's media technical assistance provider, 303.521.7328 or allison@se2communications.com.

The Problem (in a nutshell)

- **Tobacco use is costly for employers due to increased absenteeism, lost productivity, and increased medical and worker compensation expenses. Tobacco use is costly to employees due to the immediate and long term adverse health effects associated with tobacco use.^{8,9}**
- **Individuals who work in businesses that allow smoking in areas where employees are required to work, should not have to choose between a job and their health. All Colorado workers deserve to be protected from secondhand smoke in their workplace.**
- **Even outside, exposure to secondhand smoke and vapor in public places negatively impacts the health of those in the surrounding area.**
- **Tobacco use increases litter, presents a negative image to customers and visitors, and increases clean up costs for employers**

The Solution (in a nutshell)

- **Businesses can and should take action to protect their investments and the health of their workforce through comprehensive tobacco free workplace policies.**
- **Organizations that are completely tobacco free and promote cessation resources create a cleaner and healthier workplace culture that encourages employees to quit**
- **A tobacco free organizational policy creates a culture that values the health of all employees and makes it easier for everyone to remain tobacco free.**

The Problem (detailed messages)

- **Tobacco use is costly for employers due to increased absenteeism, lost productivity, and increased medical and worker compensation expenses. Tobacco use is costly to employees due to the immediate and long term adverse health effects associated with tobacco use.^{8,9}**
 - Tobacco use leads to addiction and can cause serious health problems. Nearly 70% (67.8) of current Colorado smokers attempted to quit in the last year and need resources and support to successfully to do so.¹
 - The annual excess cost for a private business to employ an individual who smokes (inclusive of smoking breaks, absenteeism, excess healthcare costs) is estimated to be approximately \$5,816.²
 - On average, employees who smoke miss 2.6 more days of work than a non-smoking employee annually.³
 - Businesses pay an average of \$2,189 in workers' compensation costs for smokers, compared with \$176 for nonsmokers. This is not because they experience more injuries. It is because smokers' bodies cannot heal as quickly.⁴
- **Individuals who work in businesses that allow smoking in areas where employees are required to work, should not have to choose between a job and their health. All Colorado workers deserve to be protected from secondhand smoke in their workplace.**
 - Tobacco free policies are proven to help people quit smoking and help those who continue to smoke, smoke less.
 - Smoke free environments encourage people who smoke to smoke less or even quit.⁵
 - Smoke free policies have been proven to increase the number of tobacco users that quit and reduce the number of cigarettes smoked among the people who continue to smoke.⁶
 - Even outside, exposure to secondhand smoke and vapor negatively impacts the health of those in the surrounding area. Studies show outdoor secondhand smoke levels can be

¹ 2016 Colorado BRFSS

² Beman M, Crane R, Seiber E, et al. *Tob Control* 2014;23:428-433 *Estimating the cost of a smoking employee.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ The Association of Health Risks With Workers Compensation Costs. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.* 43(6): 534-541, June 2001.

⁵ Neighmond, P. (2007, Oct. 25). Smoking Bans Help People Quit, Research Shows. National Public Radio. Retrieved from www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=15610995

⁶ Guide to Community Preventive Services. Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure: Smoke-Free Policies. Page updated January 30, 2017 accessed at <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-and-secondhand-smoke-exposure-smoke-free-policies>

equal to or greater than indoor secondhand smoke when smoking is occurring at close distances (<0.5m).⁷

- 50.8% of non-smokers report outdoor exposure to tobacco smoking at work⁸
 - Outdoor exposure is highest among employees in the construction (49.8%), hospitality (48.1%), and storage/warehouse (57.4%) industries.⁹
 - Employees in cigar bars, tobacco/vape shops, hookah lounges and hotels are still being exposed to secondhand smoke while they work.
 - The use of e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices expose employees and customers to harmful chemicals.
- **Tobacco use increases litter, presents a negative image to customers and visitors, and increases clean up costs for employers**
 - Tobacco product litter (TPL) comprises between 22% and 36% of all visible litter.¹⁰
 - Tobacco product litter not only has a negative impact on the environment, but can also influence the perception of customers visiting your business.
 - Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in the United States.¹¹ This particular litter lasts for years and allows more than 4,000 chemicals to seep into the soil and water supply.¹²

Solution (Detailed Messages)

- **Businesses have the freedom to take action to protect their investments and the health of their workforce through comprehensive tobacco free workplace policies.**
 - In smoke free environments, workers become healthier and have lower health care costs.¹³
 - Policies that promote 100% smoke free work environments have been shown to increase productivity while reducing time lost due to sick days.

⁷ Klepeis NE, Ott WR, Switzer P. (2007) Real-time Measurement of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Particles. *Journal of Air Waste Manag Assoc.* 2007; May; 57 (5): 522-34

⁸ Levinson, Arnold et. al. Adult tobacco use and exposure, Colorado 2015. COmmunity Epidemiology and Program Evaluation Group.

⁹ Levinson, et.al., Tobacco Use Behaviors in the Workforce, Colorado 2015. Community Epidemiology and Program Evaluation Group.

¹⁰ Schneider JE, Peterson NA, Kiss N, et al

Tobacco litter costs and public policy: a framework and methodology for considering the use of fees to offset abatement costs *Tobacco Control* 2011;**20**:i36-i41.

¹¹ Tilson, E.C., McBride, C.M., Lipkus, C.M., Catalano, R.F. (2004). Testing the Interaction between Parent-Child Relationship Factors and Parent Smoking to Predict Youth Smoking. *J. Adolescent Health*, 35(3), 182-189.

¹² Slaughter, E., Gersberg, R.M., Watanabe, K., Rudolph, J., Stransky, C., Novotny, T.E. (2011). Toxicity of Cigarette Butts, and their Chemical Components, to Marine and Freshwater Fish. *Tobacco Control*, 20, i25-i29.

¹³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (June 2008). *Save Lives, Save Money: Make Your Business Smoke-Free*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

- Successful cessation can lead to a savings nearly \$6,000 annually, per smoke¹⁴
- **Most local smoke free laws are out of date and do not prohibit the use of electronic smoking devices in outdoor public places, exposing the public to harmful chemicals.**
 - Prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes and electronic smoking devices where conventional cigarettes are banned sends the message to our youth that tobacco use of any kind is unsafe.¹⁵
 - Vapor from e-cigarettes is NOT harmless “water vapor” and is not as safe as clean air.¹⁶
 - A growing number of Colorado communities are making clean air the standard by prohibiting the use of electronic smoking devices in settings where smoking is banned, such as outdoor public place, including Arvada, Breckenridge, Golden, Boulder, Brighton, Fort Collins, Littleton and Wheat Ridge.
- **Organizations that are completely tobacco free and promote cessation resources create a cleaner and healthier workplace culture that encourages employees to quit**
 - 100% tobacco free workplace policies support higher quit rates among employees as compared to organizations that provide designated smoking areas.
 - Comprehensive Tobacco Free workplace policies can increase productivity, lower absenteeism rates, lower health insurance premiums, decrease healthcare and worker’s compensation costs, and save on maintenance and clean up costs.
 - Coloradans want smoke-free workplaces.¹⁷
- **A tobacco free organizational policy creates a culture that values the health of all employees and and makes it easier for everyone to remain tobacco free.**
 - A review of smoke-free workplaces internationally concluded that smoke-free workplaces lead to:
 - A four percent decrease in the number of smokers
 - Three fewer cigarettes a day smoked by continuing smokers¹⁸

¹⁴ Berman, M., Crane, R., Seiber, E., & Munar, M. (2014). Estimating the Cost of a Smoking Employee. *Tobacco Control*, 23(5), 428.

¹¹ Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act, C.R.S. Sections 25-14-204 to 25-14-206, 24-34-402.5. (2006).

¹⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health. (2016). Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems: Key Facts

¹⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health. (2016). Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems: Key Facts. [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/pdfs/ends-key-facts2015-508tagged.pdf>

¹⁷ Colorado TABS 2015

¹⁸ Fichtenberg CM and Glantz SA (2002). Effect of smoke-free workplaces on smoking behaviour: systematic review. *British Medical Journal* 325:188