

Workplace Solutions

from the American Cancer Society



Strategies for Promoting and Implementing a Smoke-free Workplace



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Introduction

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Businesses are becoming increasingly sensitive to health and safety practices at the workplace that protect employees. Tobacco cessation continues to be one of the most cost-effective measures to reduce health care costs and increase productivity at the workplace. For this reason, more and more companies across the nation are adopting tobacco-free policies and providing worker benefits and services that support prevention and cessation of tobacco use. To protect all individuals from exposure to secondhand smoke, companies will, ideally, implement policies that require a smoke-free environment on all company property (including vehicles), and provide smoking cessation support for their employees and covered dependents. Information in this booklet, adapted from the CDC's comprehensive guide *Making Your Workplace Smokefree: A Decision Maker's Guide*, can assist employers in creating a safe, healthful environment that enhances employee well-being, while improving the company's bottom line.

For each employee who successfully quits tobacco, an employer can expect to see an annual savings of nearly \$3,500.*

—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998

*Based on health care and lost productivity costs, converted to 2007 dollars.

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Strategies for Promoting a Smoke-free Workplace Policy

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Employers can take many steps to reduce smoking-related costs and the human toll of tobacco use. Below are strategies your company can choose when developing your smoke-free workplace policy:

Policy Change

- Implement a smoke-free workplace policy.
- Utilize the American Cancer Society Smoking Cessation Tool and Smoke-free Implementation Guide.

Smoking Cessation Health Benefits

- Provide coverage for smoking cessation counseling.
- Provide coverage for pharmaceutical aides.
- Financially support multiple quit attempts by the smoker, if necessary.
- Offer smoking cessation information and literature through a year-round communications plan.

Corporate Gold Standard

Policy

- Implement a smoke-free workplace policy.

Support smoking cessation through health benefits.

- Provide coverage for smoking cessation counseling.
- Provide coverage for pharmaceutical aides.
- Financially support multiple quit attempts by the smoker if necessary.
- Offer smoking cessation information and literature through a year-round communications plan.

Cessation initiatives

- Provide employee incentives to stop smoking.
- Provide information on the benefits of cessation.
- Offer other wellness activities.
- Participate in the American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout®.

Linkages with the health care system

- Provide initiatives or incentives to encourage physician referrals to cessation services.
- Assist physicians in systematically linking to smoking quitlines.

Identify one key staff person to coordinate the development and implementation of a non-smoking policy (a policy tailored to the size, type, and culture of your organization).

- Consider forming a Smoke-free Committee to assist with development of the policy and implementation. Ideally, this committee would include representatives from management, union (if applicable), smokers, former smokers, nonsmokers, and various cultural groups.
- Determine who in your corporation must review (e.g., legal counsel) and who must sign off on the new policy and implementation plan.

Assess your company:

- Outline your policy objectives:
 - Provide an inviting, safe, and healthy environment for customers and employees by protecting them from secondhand smoke.
 - Reduce costs associated with smoking (e.g., employer and employee health care costs, absenteeism, building maintenance).
 - Reduce likelihood of litigation related to impact of secondhand smoke on employees.
 - Review your organization's current smoking policy.

How is it perceived?

- Review existing health benefit coverage or other company support to help employees and their families quit smoking.
- Identify your organization's strengths and weaknesses that would impact implementation of a new policy (e.g., attitudes of management and employees).
- Review best practices and lessons learned from other corporations that have implemented non-smoking policies.

Developing the New Non-smoking Policy

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Non-smoking policies can include:

- Purpose of the policy and its link with organizational values and strategy.
- People affected by the policy (e.g., employees, customers, vendors).
- Identification of where smoking is prohibited (and permitted, if anywhere*).
- Enforcement and consequences of noncompliance.
- Identification of support that will be available for smokers who want to quit (e.g., counseling, medications, benefit coverage).
- Effective date of policy and transition steps, if any.

* It is strongly recommended that the smoke-free policy prohibit smoking in company facilities and vehicles (and on company grounds). Permitting smoking in designated areas, including separately ventilated areas, is strongly discouraged. Secondhand smoke is a health hazard. Ventilation technologies do not sufficiently protect individuals from the harmful effects of breathing in secondhand smoke.

Design the implementation plan:

- Develop action steps, timetable, and staff accountability for implementation. Include time to:
 - Communicate the policy and support available to smokers (companies typically provide one to four months advance warning, some provide a longer time frame).
 - Educate and support employees (companies might consider educating employees about the dangers of secondhand smoke before announcing the new policy).
 - Prepare management and supervisory staff.

Strategic Timing

Consider coordinating your activities around key calendar events:

- The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout® held annually, the third Thursday in November.
- The World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day held in May.
- The first of the year to coincide with New Year's resolutions.

Developing the New Non-smoking Policy

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When communicating the policy and educating employees:

- Be clear that management fully supports the policy (e.g., announcement could be accompanied by letter from CEO).
- Consider holding meetings with supervisors prior to the announcement.
- Extensively communicate through vehicles such as staff meetings; notices posted throughout the workplace; fact sheets in pay envelopes; intranet, e-mail, speakers/presentations, and others.
- Amend employee handbooks, rules of employment, training materials, and policy/procedure manuals to include the new policy and enforcement procedures.
- Seek employee feedback so questions and concerns can be addressed.
- On the effective date of the policy, it is important that the following be in place: signage, smoking cessation and smoker support, and facility changes (if any).
- Provide employees an avenue for asking questions and making comments, such as a designated e-mail box.
- Develop a 1-2 page document with answers to frequently asked questions. Post in a public forum such as the company intranet, monthly newsletters, and staff break rooms.

Consider offering support to smokers who want to quit:

- Decide what support the company can offer smokers to help them change their smoking behavior. Support services should be in place in advance of instituting a non-smoking policy. Support can include:
 - Providing smoking cessation classes or counseling at the workplace.
 - Provide financial coverage for classes and counseling through health plans (covering both employees and their families).
 - Provide coverage for medications.
 - Encourage use of telephone quitlines.
 - Communicate availability of community-based cessation programs and self-help materials.
- Distribute information on benefits of quitting or reducing smoking; how to prevent relapse for those who have quit; and how nonsmokers can support their smoking colleagues and family members.

As an employer, you can reduce employee smoking rates, reduce health care costs, and increase employee productivity by adopting tobacco-free policies and offering tobacco cessation services.

Coverage of Services

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Ensure your corporate benefit plan covers smoking cessation therapies and medications. Smoking cessation programs are the most successful when designed to:

- Cover the cost of counseling services, including proactive telephone counseling, individual counseling, or classes;
- Offer FDA-approved drug therapies, including prescription and over-the-counter nicotine replacement medication and Bupropion;
- Offer counseling sessions over a period of several weeks for the greatest effect;
- Reduce out of pocket expenses for employees who wish to make a quit attempt.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy is supplied as a gum, skin patch, nasal spray, or inhaler. It works by providing a substitute source of nicotine, without the other harmful components of cigarette smoke. Nicotine replacement therapy can reduce or eliminate the withdrawal symptoms many have when they quit smoking.

Zyban (bupropion hydrochloride) and **Chantix** (varenicline) are non-nicotine-containing medications available by prescription. Zyban reduces the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal by acting on chemicals in the brain related to nicotine cravings. Zyban is also prescribed under another name—Wellbutrin—to treat depression. Chantix lessens pleasure from smoking and reduces symptoms of withdrawal.

<i>TYPE</i>	<i>BRAND NAME</i>
Nicotine Gum	Nicorette
Nicotine Patch	Nicoderm CQ, Nicotrol
Nicotine Spray	Nicotrol NS
Nicotine Inhaler	Nicotrol inhaler
Bupropion Hydrochloride	Zyban
Varenicline	Chantix

A Sample Tobacco-free Workplace Policy

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Tobacco-Free Workplace Model Policy

Use this model policy, provided by the Tobacco Public Policy Center, to create your own tobacco-free policy. This policy can also be found on the Tobacco Public Policy Center's Web site at www.tobaccopolicy.org.

[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. [IF APPLICABLE—This policy is designed in compliance with the [STATE/LOCAL LAW], which will go into effect on [DATE].

I. POLICY

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

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 _____.

Communicating the Policy and Plan

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A Year-round Smoking Cessation Program

Most smokers (70 percent) report a desire to quit, and roughly 46 percent make an attempt each year.

Smoking is very complex. In addition to being addicted to the nicotine, some report being hooked on the act of smoking itself. For some, the addiction is stronger and for others, the act of smoking serves as a way to relax, become more comfortable in social settings, or as a reward for getting through tough situations. With or without the physical need, there can still be strong urges to smoke.

Smokers attempting to quit need a great deal of support. Smokers can rapidly move in and out of a stage of readiness when deciding to make a quit attempt. It is important that your company is ready and supportive of the employee who decides to make a quit attempt.

Providing your employees with year-round messages on your company's smoking cessation benefits and coverage will be critical. Tell employees about the help you provide through:

- paycheck inserts
- company newsletters
- posters
- emails
- other company media



Implementing your Smoke-free Policy

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Principles of Successful Smoke-free Workplace Implementation

- Focus on smoke, not the smoker.
- Focus on health and safety regarding secondhand smoke, not individual rights.
- Obtain management commitment and support. This support can be made visible to employees through the use of emails, 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 secondhand smoke and materials used in the work processes.
- Allow four to six months from the time of the announcement to implementation, depending upon the size of the organization and magnitude of the change from the old to the new policy.
- Ensure that restrictions and enforcement are equitable across job categories.
- Offer smoking cessation resources to all employees and their families before and after the policy change.
- Enforce the secondhand smoke policy just as any other policy enforcement. Provide training in enforcement for supervisors. Do not differentiate between smoking breaks and other kinds of breaks.
- Provide continuous smoking cessation educational opportunities and resources after the policy has been implemented to support employees in their attempts to quit smoking and to prevent relapse.

From: Making Your Workplace Smokefree: A Decision Maker's Guide, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wellness Councils of America, American Cancer Society, p 38.

Enforcing the Smoke-free Workplace Policy

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When changing or adding restrictions to standards of conduct, it is a good idea to let employees know formally.

Putting policies in writing has several advantages:

- It enables managers and subordinates to clearly understand individual and group boundaries and responsibilities.
- It is formalized to ensure that all employees are getting the same information.
- It can be referred to when/if an employee commits an infraction.
- The organization will be able to prove compliance with federal and state laws that may require you to have anti-harassment rules, no-smoking policies, or drug-free workplace rules.

Follow these guidelines to help make certain a policy is implemented and applied:

- Policy manuals should be updated and easily accessible to all employees.
- Employees should sign a document stating they have read, understood, and plan to follow the company policy.
- The signed document should be retained in the employee's personnel file.
- Training should be provided for supervisors and employees, when applicable.
- Discipline should be consistently applied to all individuals in similar circumstances.
- Supervisors should be fully advised of their responsibility in implementation, and should perform scheduled inspections to ensure that work areas and employees are conforming to policy specifications.
- Provide training to management two to four weeks before implementation of policy.
- Describe the policy and outline situations they may have to deal with, such as smoking in washrooms and company vehicles.
- Train receptionists, custodians, security staff, and others on how to advise visitors, contractors, and members of the public about the new policy.
- Stress that you expect success.
- The best enforcement procedure is the same as other drug-free workplace policies.

Generally, inserting the following statement into the employee handbook will sufficiently address enforcement issues:

"Any violation of this tobacco use policy will result in discipline, up to and including discharge under [COMPANY NAME]'s progressive discipline policy."

When drafting enforcement procedures, remember that tobacco is an addictive substance:

Show sensitivity to employees who are addicted to nicotine by:

- Ensuring fair and equal enforcement of the policy.
- Providing ongoing information on support through awareness programs, handout materials, and cessation service information.
- Making certain every employee has received a copy of the new policy, and make a note in employees' records when policy has been distributed and received.

Handling Tough Questions

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Implementing a new smoke-free workplace policy creates questions and concerns on the part of employees. Many companies report receiving less negative feedback than expected, however, it is important to be prepared for handling questions and concerns you may receive, particularly from those who smoke. Below are a few questions and possible responses related to the company's new smoke-free workplace policy.

Q: We have always been allowed to smoke—why has the company decided to make this change?

- Our company cares about the health and well-being of our employees. Secondhand smoke has been classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Group A carcinogen—a category reserved only for the most dangerous cancer-causing agents in humans.
- The 1992 EPA report concluded that there is a strong association between secondhand smoke exposure and lung cancer.
- Scientific evidence shows that smoking is dangerous to our health, and that many health issues are associated with secondhand smoke which affects our nonsmoking employees.

Q: Our company has always had a designated smoking area—why is this being eliminated?

Data shows that designated areas do not protect nonsmokers from the effects of secondhand smoke. Smoke can enter the non-designated areas through the building's air handling system. This exposes nonsmokers to the toxins contained within cigarette smoke. Secondhand smoke can worsen existing pulmonary symptoms in people with asthma and chronic bronchitis, increase eye irritation, sore throats, and nausea.

Q: As a smoker, isn't it my right to have a smoking area?

Our organization is not saying you cannot smoke, we are saying that you can not smoke on company property. Smoking is not a right, it is a choice. Our company does have the responsibility to protect our nonsmokers from harmful tobacco smoke, and to provide all employees with a safe and healthful workplace.

Q: I am probably going to have to look for a job where smoking is allowed on site.

Although we would be saddened to lose any of our valued employees, we understand if you feel you must seek employment with another company.

Q: Smoking doesn't interfere with our production—why is it being banned?

Smoking does interfere with productivity and our rising health care costs. Smokers are absent from work more frequently than nonsmokers, and visit health care facilities six times more often than nonsmokers.

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Q: Won't we lose customers who smoke over this?

Many companies nationwide observe smoke-free work environments. Most customers will respect our decision to provide a safe, healthy, smoke-free environment for our employees.

Q: If I do decide to quit smoking, will the company be willing to help me absorb the financial cost?

- If yes, provide employees with a list of available counseling services and pharmaceutical products the company is willing to cover.
- If not, provide the employee with a list of smoking cessation programs available within the community. You may refer employees to the American Cancer Society toll-free number (1-800-ACS-2345) available 24/7 for information on telephone counseling services and local resources.

Q: If we have to smoke outside, what will we do in bad weather?

- If property is designated totally tobacco-free (preferable): If you choose to smoke, you will have to do so while not on company property or in company vehicles.
- If designated smoking areas are provided (less preferable to totally tobacco-free): If you choose to smoke, you will have to do so in the company designated smoking area. Unfortunately, smoking outdoors may mean experiencing bad weather. If you are interested in quitting, we can provide you with smoking cessation information. (If your company is going to allow smoking outside explain where the smoking designated areas will be located.)

Q: If everyone in my area smokes, why do we have to go outside?

Unfortunately, smoke enters the ventilation system and affects nonsmokers located in other parts of the building. Our objective is to provide an environment that protects our employees from the effects of secondhand smoke.

Q: Aren't you worried that making us smoke outside will cause smoking employees to be less productive?

Our company has a policy regarding the length of breaks. Nonsmokers and employees who smoke are expected to observe the designated break time. Employees who smoke are not allowed to take longer breaks.

Additional Resources

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Tobacco use among employees, as well as exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke, costs employers billions of dollars per year.

Adopting a tobacco-free environment provides a safe, healthy place for people to work and customers to visit, while supporting a healthy bottom line for the workplace.

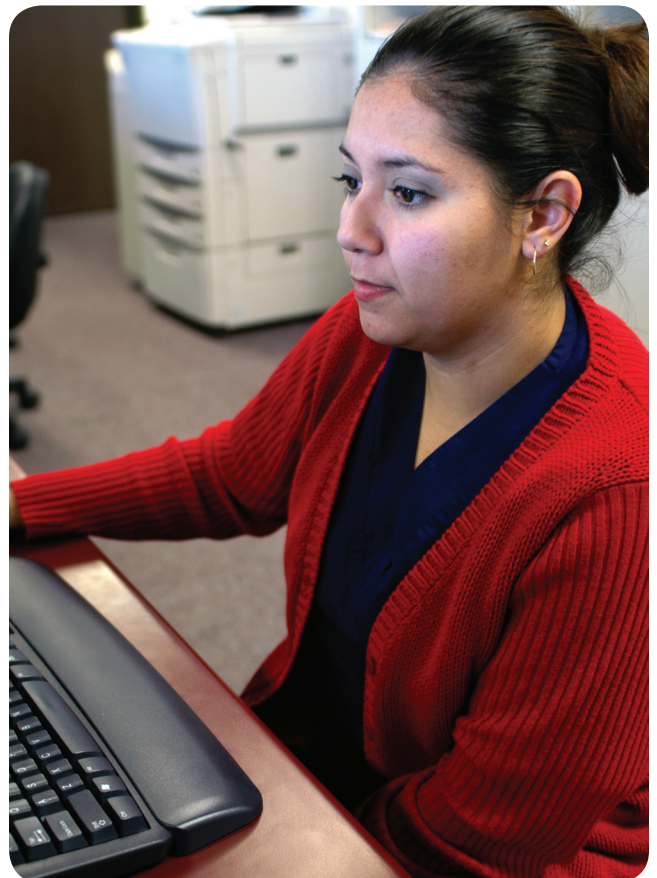
For more in depth information on the economic and health costs associated with secondhand smoke, and a guide to going smokefree in your company, see *Making Your Workplace Smokefree: A Decision Maker's Guide*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wellness Councils of America, American Cancer Society. Available online at www.cdc.gov.

For more information and local resources, contact:

American Cancer Society

1.800.ACS.2345 (1.800.227.2345)

www.cancer.org





Hope.Progress.Answers.®

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www.cancer.org