

Smoke-free workplaces

A guide to developing a smoke-free workplace policy



FreshStart
A BETTER WAY TO QUIT



**Cancer
Council**
Western Australia

Congratulations on deciding to become a smoke-free workplace.

A smoke-free policy is an opportunity for employers to protect the health of their employees and reduce smoking-related costs. As people become better informed about the harm tobacco products cause to smokers and non-smokers (through exposure to second hand smoke), smoke-free environments are becoming the norm. There is a global trend towards safer, cleaner environments. This document outlines the benefits of developing a smoke-free policy and provides a nine point checklist on how to develop a policy with advice on where to go for more information.



It's time to go smoke-free

The benefits of a smoke-free workplace

A 2008 Western Australian economic study found that the cost of tobacco use for business in 2004/05 was \$629.9 million.

Introducing a smoke-free policy could greatly benefit your workplace for the following reasons:

- Less employee absenteeism
- Increased productivity on the job
- Decreased early retirement due to ill health
- Lower annual healthcare costs
- Lower risk of fire damage, explosions and other accidents related to smoking
- Lower fire insurance premiums
- Lower cleaning and maintenance costs
- Reduces the risk of legal action from second hand smoke injuries
- Reinforces the commitment to a healthier workplace
- Raises awareness of the health risks of smoking and encourages employees to cut down or quit

There are also legal requirements to provide a safe working environment, including protection from exposure to second hand smoke. For more information contact the Department of Health, Tobacco Control Branch on 1300 784 892.

Checklist: how to develop a smoke-free workplace policy

With a little planning a smoke-free policy is easy to implement especially if employees, both smokers and non-smokers, are involved in its development. The following are points to consider:

✓ 1. Establish a workplace committee

Include representatives from all parts of the organisation. Senior management support and commitment is vital.

✓ 2. Involve employees (smokers and non-smokers)

Involving employees and incorporating their suggestions is essential to the success of the policy. It is important to assess staff attitudes or concerns about the workplace becoming smoke-free, so they can be addressed. This can be done through meetings, focus groups or surveys.

✓ 3. Formulate a written policy

The objectives of the policy and how these will be achieved need to be clear. It's a good idea to integrate the policy with other programs and procedures related to health and safety in the workplace. The written policy should cover:

- Purpose of the policy (i.e. to avoid the harmful effects of smoking and exposure to second hand smoke)
- A link between the smoke-free policy and organisational values
- Time-frame for implementation
- A clear statement of where smoking is not permitted, for example on the premises, in work vehicles, at work functions and whilst wearing work uniforms
- Details of support available for smokers such as quit smoking courses
- Consequences of non-compliance with the policy
- Contact persons who can answer questions related to the policy

4. Communicate the policy to employees

Inform employees from the outset and well before implementation. Focus on the smoke not the smoker and on health and safety not on individual rights. Emphasising benefits of a clean air policy for both smokers and non-smokers is less confrontational and more acceptable than emphasising individual rights of non-smokers.

5. Provide information and support to smokers

Newsletter, flyers, posters and email are useful media for promoting the benefits of quitting and for providing information on the risks of smoking. Quit smoking courses can be incorporated into the workplace health and safety program with smokers allowed time to attend.

6. Determine consequences of non-compliance

Some organisations develop a clear process for handling employees who continue to smoke in the workplace. This should be fair and consistent with sanctions for breaches of other company policies.

7. Follow a timetable for implementation

A timetable allows for easy implementation of the policy in stages. It is important to note that after the policy is announced a transition stage is required to give employees time to adjust to the new environment. A good time frame for development of the policy and its implementation is 4 to 12 months.

8. Provide training

Provide training to health and safety and other key personnel on implementation of the policy and support available to smokers. Offer quit smoking programs to employees in the workplace. Develop a referral system to other quit smoking services outside the workplace.

9. Evaluate and monitor implementation

Review the policy to assess whether it is achieving its objectives. A review is recommended every 12 to 18 months.

Information and useful links

1. Health effects of smoking

Below are some useful links for information on second hand smoke and fact sheets on the effects of smoking.

Tobacco smoke and involuntary smoking (IARC Monographs, Volume 83, 2004)
<http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/index.php>

The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke:
a report of the Surgeon General
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke>

Facts and information on tobacco and smoking (Cancer Council Western Australia)
<http://www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/tobacco/>

2. Economic benefits of a smoke-free policy in the workplace

Useful links for information on the costs of smoking related absenteeism, accidents and injuries in Australia today.

A detailed 2008 national economic study shows tobacco smoking costs Australia a staggering \$31.5 billion a year. Costs to business alone are over \$8.24 billion a year. The report is available at <http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/mono64>

A report on the costs of smoking in Western Australia:
<http://www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/tobacco/tobaccoresources/>

3. Information and examples of smoke-free policies in the workplace

Going smoke-free: a guide for workplaces
<http://www.quit.org.au/downloads/workplacekit.pdf>

Going smoke-free: workplace recommendations
<http://svc040.wic029p.server-web.com/editorial.asp?pageid=386>

4. Quit smoking help and support

Individual support

One-on-one internet support
<http://www.thequitcoach.org.au/>

Telephone information and counselling
The Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Each workplace may have their own service provider to assist individuals to quit smoking and deal with other personal and work related issues. For further information go to Employee Assistance Professional Association Australia
<http://www.eapaa.org.au/>

Quit smoking group support

Cancer Council Western Australia's *Fresh Start* quit smoking course
Contact the *Fresh Start* coordinator on 9388 4333 or email freshstart@cancerwa.asn.au



Resources available

Displays of posters, information brochures and signage are helpful in promoting smoke-free policies as well as where people may or may not smoke.

“No smoking” signage in relation to smoking regulations and government policy has been produced by the Department of Health and can be previewed online with instructions for ordering at

<http://www.tobaccocontrol.health.wa.gov.au/publications/publicplaces.cfm#signage>

General information on publications and resources is available through the Department of Health’s Online Publication Ordering System at

<http://www.population.health.wa.gov.au/ordering/>

You can view resources available for ordering or place an order on this site. Alternatively, you can place a resource order through HealthInfo on 1300 135 030.

Cancer Council Western Australia also produces a range of posters, stickers and fact sheets on smoking and health available for order at

<http://www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/tobacco/tobaccoresources/>

You may also choose to produce your own signage and resources in keeping with your own corporate style.

Cancer Council Western Australia gratefully acknowledges the support of Quit Victoria whose *Fresh Start* course and materials have been adapted for use in Western Australia.

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