

Smoking factsheet

Why target smoking?

Smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease in Australia.¹ Smoking affects almost all the organs in the body and causes cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease and many other damaging and potentially fatal conditions.² There are also proven risks to non-smokers from being exposed to tobacco smoke in the environment, known as passive smoking.³

In Western Australia, the *Tobacco Products Control Act* (2006) and related regulations prevent people from smoking in enclosed public places. The *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations* (1996) prohibit employers, workers and self-employed persons smoking in enclosed workplaces, including in a vehicle.

The effects of smoking

Smoking can result in many health problems that lead to time off work and increased use of medical services.² A study from 2008 showed that smoking costs Australia a staggering \$31.5 billion a year. \$8.25 billion of this was costs to business alone. The study also showed that smokers were 1.4 times more likely to be absent from work than people who had never smoked.⁴ Those working in manufacturing, transport and storage, and accommodation and restaurants have the highest smoking rates.⁵

Smoke-free workplaces can result in a range of benefits, including:⁶

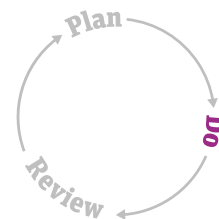
- » Greater employee productivity and morale
- » Fewer absences due to ill health
- » Improved health of workers
- » Removing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (and the associated workers compensation claims)
- » More awareness of the health risks of smoking
- » Increased number of workers attempting to quit or cut down
- » A better corporate image
- » Decreased cleaning and maintenance costs
- » Decreased fire risk

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What can we do about it?

Developing and implementing a policy that aims to eliminate smoking in the workplace communicates to all staff and visitors that your workplace is committed to providing a healthy work environment.

To target smoking in your workplace:

- » Develop a policy that addresses elimination of smoking in the workplace
- » Enforce your policy and manage non-compliance
- » Contact *Fresh Start Workplace Services* for information, advice and support on becoming a smoke-free workplace
- » Signpost smoke-free areas, including outdoor areas where smoking is not permitted
- » Provide information on quitting smoking, including posters and brochures, throughout the workplace
- » Provide support to workers who want to quit smoking by organising a free *Fresh Start Workplace Services* smoking cessation course

References:

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2. US Department of Health and Human Services. 2004. The health consequences of smoking: a report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: US Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2006. The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke: a report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Centre for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
4. Collins D, & Lapsley H. 2008. The costs of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian society in 2004/05. In. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing (Australia).
5. Pricewaterhouse Coopers. 2010. Workplace Wellness in Australia; Aligning action with aims; Optimising the benefits of workplace wellness. Sydney. PricewaterhouseCoopers' National Health Practice.
6. Department of Health, Western Australia . 2009. Supporting Smoke-free Workplaces – A Policy Implementation Guide. Perth. DoHWA.

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