



# Smoke-Free Workplace

## Kicking the Habit: It Starts With A Smoke-Free Policy



### The Dangers of Tobacco Smoke Pollution

Tobacco smoke pollution (TSP) is the toxic mixture of smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers. Among the over 3,800 chemical compounds in TSP are more than 40 cancer-causing substances. TSP exposure is associated with more than 53,000 deaths to non-smokers annually in the U.S., primarily through lung cancer and heart disease. TSP also contributes to other diseases such as pneumonia, asthma, bronchitis, and even the common cold.

### Smoke-Free Workplace

With the average American worker spending roughly 100,000 hours on the job over a career, the severity of the health impacts of TSP exposure must be considered when deciding whether to continue to allow smoking in the workplace. This makes good business sense for several reasons. A smoke-free workplace:

- Increases quality of life for employees
- Decreases absenteeism
- Saves on other health-related personnel costs

Once the decision has been made, it is recommended that a business adopt a written policy in order to promote a sense of fairness with both smoking and non-smoking personnel.

### Elements of a Smoke-Free Policy

At its core, a smoke-free policy eliminates all smoking in company facilities, unless there is a smoking area that has a ventilation system independent of the rest of the building, that is, with a direct air exhaust to the outside.

Typically, a policy will contain several key components. Each employee should be notified of the policy by internal memo and by posting in common areas. Signs should be placed to alert visitors of the policy.

**For more on Tobacco Smoke Pollution, contact Clean Air Council: 717-230-8806 or [www.cleanair.org](http://www.cleanair.org).**

### Recommended Policy Components:

1. Description of the known public health dangers of tobacco products and the fact that the business incurs costs by continuing to allow smoking.
2. Announcement of the new policy and notice that it applies to both employees and non-employee visitors. The extent of the policy should be provided here, such as whether it will apply to all indoor areas (recommended) and to company vehicles.
3. Indication of the availability of any outside smoking area, perhaps defining the minimum distance from the building entranceways or ventilation systems.
4. Description of employee obligation to care for the smoking area.
5. Discussion of smoking breaks, and fairness to non-smokers on the time issue.
6. Information on any company smoking cessation programs and the proper contact person;
7. Consequences of violating the policy.

### Outdoor Smoking Areas

If one is provided, make sure the area is not near air intakes or directly outside of common doorways. Indoor ventilation systems and the difference in air pressure can draw tobacco smoke into the building.

### Tobacco Cessation Programs

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 70% of smokers want to quit. Many health insurance plans provide coverage for tobacco cessation programs, as do some public health clinics. The American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association also offer self-help material.

### Everyone wins: a Smoke-Free Workplace

Adopt a smoke-free policy, and watch employee morale and productivity rise along with the bottom line.

