



Tobacco Use in the Workplace

A Model Policy

Employers concerned about their employees may be able to improve their health and help them be more productive by creating tobacco-free workplaces. Many state and local governments now require workplaces to be smoke-free. Making your workplace completely tobacco-free can have an even greater impact. Both tobacco user and non-user employees may be helped by such policies.

Benefits of a tobacco-free workplace

For the employees

- A tobacco-free environment helps create a safer, healthier workplace
- Workers who are bothered by smoke will not be exposed to it at work
- Tobacco users who want to quit may have more of a reason to do so
- Those who use tobacco may appreciate a clear company policy about tobacco use at work
- Managers are relieved when there is a clearly defined process for dealing with tobacco in the workplace

For the employer

- A tobacco-free environment helps create a safer, healthier workplace
- Direct health care costs to the company may be reduced
- A clear plan that is carefully put into action by the employer to lower employees' exposure to secondhand smoke shows the company cares
- Employees may be less likely to miss work due to tobacco-related illnesses
- Maintenance costs go down when tobacco, smoke, matches, and cigarette butts are taken out of work facilities
- Office equipment, carpets, and furniture last longer
- The risk of fires is lower
- It may be possible to get lower rates on health, life, and disability insurance coverage as fewer employees use tobacco

Here is a model of a policy employers can use to help establish and maintain a tobacco-free workplace for themselves and for their employees. It can be adapted as needed. If your workers are represented by a union, work with them to create your tobacco-free policy. Worker safety and health is a key union concern, too.

A model policy

Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, as well as the life-threatening diseases linked to the use of all forms of tobacco, it shall be the policy of _____, effective [DATE], to provide a tobacco-free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products or “spit” tobacco, and it applies to both employees and non-employee visitors of _____.

Definition

1. No use of tobacco products will be allowed within the facilities of _____ at any time.
2. The decision to not provide designated smoking areas outside the building will be at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.
3. No use of tobacco products is permitted within the facilities or on the property of _____ at any time.
4. No tobacco use in any company vehicle.
5. There will be no use of any form of tobacco in _____ vehicles at any time.
6. There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting people on _____ authorized business.
7. Supervisors will discuss the issue of taking breaks with their staff, both smokers and non-smokers. Together they will develop effective solutions that do not interfere with the productivity of the staff.

Procedure

1. Employees will be informed of this policy through signs posted in _____ facilities and vehicles, newsletters, inserts in pay envelopes, the policy manual, e-mail, and/or orientation and training provided by their supervisors.
2. Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs, and it will be explained by their hosts.
3. The _____ will help employees who want to quit tobacco by helping them access recommended cessation programs and materials.
4. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.

References

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