

HOW TO GO SMOKE FREE



a guide for workplaces

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January 2009



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Acknowledgements

North Coast Area Health Service colleagues for developing and coordinating the Smoke Free Health Care program which is the basis for this guide.

Dale Attwater, Stephen Scott and Peter Dibella, Harwood Mill (NSW Sugar Milling Cooperative Ltd) for their innovative approach to going smoke free which encouraged the development of this guide.

Disclaimer

The information provided in this document can only assist in a general way. This document does not replace any statutory requirements of any relevant State and Territory legislation. North Coast Area Health Service accepts no liability arising from the use of or reliance on the material contained in this document.

Before relying on the material contained in this document, users should carefully make their own assessment as to its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, and should obtain any appropriate professional or medical advice relevant to their particular circumstances.



Introduction

This guide aims to assist workplaces plan and implement a smoke free workplace policy. The guide is based on experience from two industries going smoke free: North Coast Area Health Service facilities and the NSW Sugar Milling Cooperative's Harwood Mill and Refinery; and related evidence. Tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace is an important health and safety issue.

Tobacco smoking is the risk factor associated with the greatest disease burden ¹ and is estimated to kill approximately half of long-term smokers. ² Smoking is the leading preventable cause of ill health and premature death contributing to heart disease, cancers, and lung disease. Secondhand tobacco smoke exposure can also cause disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke. ³

Totally smoke free workplaces protect non-smokers from the dangers of secondhand smoke and also encourage staff to either quit smoking or reduce their cigarette consumption. ⁴ Totally smoke free workplaces are so effective at reducing smoking rates that tobacco companies recognise smoke free policy/legislation as a threat to their business. ⁵

Key components of introducing a successful smoke free workplace policy include:

- Management and staff support
- Policy development, including supports for staff who smoke and compliance management
- Consultation
- Communication
- Maintenance and review

These are discussed in detail in the remainder of this guide.



Management and Staff Support

Smoking restrictions in indoor and outdoor public spaces are supported by the majority of smokers and non-smokers. Support for smoke free workplaces is also high. ⁶

Management and staff should be convinced or at least educated of the benefits of a smoke free workplace policy before its introduction. This will increase the likelihood of the majority of managers and staff supporting the initiative. Benefits of implementing a smoke free workplace policy for both management and staff are detailed below.

Benefits to management

BENEFIT	EXPLANATION
Improved Occupational Health and Safety	Employers have obligations under the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and the NSW Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 to prohibit smoking in enclosed public places under its control.
Save Money	Employers bear direct and indirect costs from employees' smoking. These can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Higher employee absenteeism● Decreased productivity on-the-job● Increased long-term sick leave and early retirement due to ill health● Higher maintenance and cleaning costs● Higher risk of fire damage and other accidents related to smoking ⁷ The benefits of making workplaces smoke free are far greater than the costs. ⁷



Benefits to staff

BENEFIT	EXPLANATION
Incentive and support to quit smoking	A smoke free workplace and the associated supports are extra incentives for staff who smoke to quit smoking. Also, any quit smoking attempts are more likely to be successful when a person works in a smoke free workplace than if they did not.
Improved health	Non-smoking staff will no longer be exposed to hazardous secondhand tobacco smoke in the workplace. Staff that smoke who subsequently quit smoking or reduce their cigarette consumption by using nicotine replacement therapy will experience many health benefits.
Greater equity	A policy that restricts smoking breaks of staff that smoke will result in greater equity of working hours for all staff.

Once management and staff support the introduction of a smoke free workplace policy, it is time to write the policy.



Policy Development

Who is best placed to develop a smoke free workplace policy?

Staff that should be involved in drafting the policy include:

- Managers
- Union Representatives
- Staff Health Officer (or Committee)
- Occupational Health and Safety Committee (or Officer)

What should be included in the smoke free workplace policy?

A smoke free workplace policy should include statements and information on the following.

Purpose

The purpose of a smoke free workplace policy is to provide a safe working environment for staff and others by eliminating secondhand tobacco smoke exposure, and assist staff quit smoking and improve their health.

Timeframe for implementation

Like all policies, a smoke free workplace policy should be developed in a well-considered and consultative manner. However, there are risks in taking too little or too much time to implement the policy once preparatory work has begun. These are outlined below.



Risks related to taking too little time:

- Staff non-compliance
- Decreased staff morale and goodwill
- Unsustainable

Risks related to taking too much time:

- Staff disengagement
- Increased anticipation anxiety
- Decreased staff morale and goodwill

The aim should be to allow time for a thorough process, but also create some sense of 'urgency' to ensure staff remain engaged. Depending on the complexity of the workplace, the time between preparatory work starting and policy implementation could be three to six months.

Another important aspect regarding timeframe is that once an implementation date has been set, every effort should be made to ensure that the goal is achieved. Changing the target date for policy implementation can have similar effects to the risks detailed above.

Clear statement on where smoking is permitted

Firstly, a decision must be made whether the policy totally bans smoking on the premises of the workplace (both indoors and outdoor areas) or whether smoking will be allowed in designated smoking areas only. Each option has pros and cons. These are discussed in the following table.



TOTALLY SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

Pros:

- Better protection of staff and others from secondhand tobacco smoke
- Will result in a greater proportion of staff quitting smoking or reducing their cigarette consumption which has subsequent benefits to the workplace
- It is best practice

Cons:

- Less accepted by staff who smoke. This may be an issue if there is a high proportion (greater than 20%) of staff in the workforce who smoke
- Compliance management may be more difficult

RETAINING A DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA ON PREMISES

Pros:

- More acceptable to staff who smoke. This may be important if there is a high proportion (greater than 20%) of staff in the workforce who smoke
- Compliance management may be easier

Cons:

- May compromise protection of staff and others from secondhand tobacco smoke
- Will result in fewer staff quitting smoking or changing their cigarette consumption
- Resources may be required to establish designated smoking areas



If a workplace chooses to retain a designated smoking area it must be a non-enclosed, well ventilated area where smoke cannot enter windows, doorways or air-conditioning vents. The designated smoking area should not replace the only outdoor area staff use during their breaks, or be a particularly appealing place to spend time. Remember: workplaces that retain designated smoking areas can expect fewer staff to quit smoking and very little change in staff cigarette consumption. ⁴

Whether smoking is permitted in work vehicles should also be considered and detailed in the policy.

Supports for staff who smoke

Implementing a smoke free workplace policy must be accompanied by adequately supporting staff who smoke to either quit smoking or abstain from smoking while at work. There are a number of strategies employers can put in place to support their staff. These can include the following and should not be limited to one in particular:

- Providing staff access to cost-price or free nicotine replacement therapy. Employers can either reimburse staff for out-of-pocket expenses or establish a relationship with a local pharmacy so costs can be billed directly to the employer
- Allow staff to receive smoking cessation counselling from the Quitline (13 7848) during work hours
- Grant leave for staff members to visit a General Practitioner to talk about smoking cessation during work hours
- Organise a work-based smoking cessation program or grant leave for staff members to attend a local smoking cessation support group during work hours. Your local Area Health Service, Aboriginal Medical Service or Division of General Practice may be able to assist with program advice
- Some workplaces also provide support for the partners of staff to quit smoking as this assists staff members to quit smoking, too.

The supports that will be made available to staff who smoke must be detailed in the policy.



Staff smoking breaks

Staff smoking breaks are a productivity, equity, and health and safety issue. Non-smokers can feel they unfairly do more work than smokers that take regular 'smoking breaks' throughout the day. Smoking breaks can also lead to service deficiencies or workplace safety concerns due to fewer staff being on active duty.

A decision should be made regarding the number of acceptable breaks staff can take to smoke during work time and be clearly stated in the policy.

North Coast Area Health Service permits staff to smoke in their award breaks and off site only.

Compliance management of staff

A clear statement is required on what the consequences are if a staff member is non-compliant with the policy. Policy non-compliance can be incorporated into normal staff disciplinary practices or specific actions can be developed and outlined in the policy.

Compliance management of visitors and others

It is acknowledged that managing compliance of visitors and others is the most difficult part of implementing a smoke free workplace policy. This is because:

- Local workplace policies are not like legislation where people can be fined or reprimanded for smoking in an area where it is not permitted
- Compliance has to be 'invited and encouraged' rather than 'enforced'
- Few people feel comfortable approaching people who are smoking in an area where it is not permitted and asking them to move or extinguish their cigarette



- Few workplaces have employees where a compliance management role is included in their job description.

Compliance management is however a critical component of a smoke free workplace policy because a small amount of non-compliance that remains unaddressed will lead to increasing non-compliance. Non-compliance devalues the policy, no smoking signs and once established is very hard to change. It is important that a high standard of compliance (aim for 90%) is established and maintained from the first day the policy is implemented.

A clear statement is also required in the policy on what the expectations are of staff to manage compliance. This could include speaking to a non-compliant person themselves or referring the instance to a manager or colleague. Other innovative methods of managing compliance could be utilised.

A clear distinction should also be detailed in the policy regarding staff 'inviting' compliance and 'enforcing' the policy. For example, staff should politely invite compliance by asking the person to take their cigarette off-site or to the designated smoking area, not enforce compliance by physically removing the person from the site or aggressively asking them to take their cigarette off-site or to the designated smoking area.

North Coast Area Health Service addressed compliance management in a number of ways, including making compliance everybody's business. It is the responsibility of all staff to speak to people they see smoking in an area where smoking is not permitted. We encourage a polite, non-confrontational approach along the lines of – "Excuse me, did you know this site is now smoke free? Can you please either put your cigarette out or finish it off-site. Thank you".

Staff that may be well-placed to undertake a compliance management role include:

- Managers
- Security
- Grounds staff
- Health and Safety Officer.



It is also important to note in the policy that if a person becomes verbally or physically aggressive after being asked to take their cigarette off-site or to the designated smoking area, the staff member must remove themselves from that situation immediately and report the incident to their manager and/or security.

Responsibilities of managers

Managers' responsibilities specific to the implementation and maintenance of the policy should be outlined. These can include:

- Promoting supports available to staff who smoke and providing access to them in a timely manner
- Managing compliance with policy
- Orientating new staff with the policy and its requirements
- Ensuring contractors or other short-term staff are aware of the policy and its requirements.

Grievances/Further Information

A clear procedure should be outlined for employees who have grievances with the policy or actions associated with the policy. Names of contact persons who can answer questions related to the policy should also be included.



Consultation

Who should be consulted following the development of the smoke free workplace policy?

All staff should have the opportunity to comment on a draft version of the policy to ensure staff are engaged and so any concerns can be resolved.

The final agreed version of the policy should then be signed by a management, Occupational Health and Safety and staff representative.

Once the smoke free workplace policy has been approved by management and staff, it is time to prepare for the policy's implementation.



Communication

What needs to happen between developing the policy and the implementation date?

Communicate the policy to:

Employees

- Conduct information sessions where staff can learn about the policy and its rationale, and ask questions
- Ensure all staff have access to a final copy of the policy
- Ensure policy implementation is an agenda item at staff meetings during this period
- Introduce a policy implementation 'countdown' via staff email or payslips to help staff prepare for the change

Visitors and others

- Disseminate a communication (letter or email) outlining the policy, its rationale and how it will effect various stakeholders
- Provide policy information leaflets at the workplace
- Use phone 'on-hold messages' to outline the policy
- Local media may be interested in covering the change process and publishing a story

Communicating the policy is extremely important. This is a time when others are given a chance to be engaged and express their concerns in the process. If ownership can be fostered, compliance will usually be positive. It also provides employers with an avenue to explain the rationale for implementing the policy. Concerns or issues that arise during this period should be addressed as soon as possible.



Signage

Signage plays an important role in communicating the policy and encouraging compliance. It also allows the workplace to look 'different' following the implementation of the policy. The International 'no smoking' symbol can be used or signs can be purposefully designed. Some examples are below:

International no smoking symbol. Stickers of this symbol can be accessed free from NSW Health or outdoor metal versions can be purchased from signage suppliers.



Using stencils and paint is an inexpensive alternative when many signs are required. Stencils can be designed and manufactured by signage suppliers.

These signs were purposefully designed by North Coast Area Health Service. They are manufactured out of UV cold laminate with anti-graffiti film.





Signage should be thoughtfully placed at workplace entrances, areas where people have historically gathered to smoke, and other discreet areas that smokers may use to smoke on site and avoid detection. It is also important if a designated smoking area on site is maintained that these are clearly sign-posted. For example, “This is a designated smoking area – smoking on site is only permitted in this area”.

Signage should be prepared in the lead-up to the policy implementation date but ultimately unveiled the day the site goes smoke free.

The supports for staff who smoke can also be communicated by internal laminated signs and placed in tea rooms or on notice boards. North Coast Area Health Service used the sign below for this purpose.

Staff, do you suffer from the following symptoms?

Anxiety	Irritation	Increased appetite
Restlessness	Frustration or anger	Insomnia
Difficulty concentrating	Depressed mood	Decreased heart rate

If you have 4 of these symptoms, as well as **CRAVING** to smoke a cigarette, you are experiencing the clinical condition of **NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL**.

Nicotine has a short half-life in the blood <120 minutes. Once nicotine levels drop, people feel driven to have another cigarette in order to avoid withdrawal. Did you know that there are 2 options?

1 RISK REDUCTION WHILE ON SHIFT

If you are not sure about quitting smoking just now, this is a great option.

Simply go to pharmacy and buy nicotine lozenges, inhaler or microtabs at cost-price (the patch is not suitable for this purpose). Use one of these intermittent forms of NRT to dose yourself at intervals during your shift. At cost-price, it's cheaper than smoking.

This approach to Risk Reduction **eliminates** any risk of leaving your safe work environment to have a smoke on the footpath. And it **reduces** the risk to your respiratory health during your shift. All forms of nicotine replacement therapy are safer ways to deliver nicotine than smoking.

IMPORTANT: this approach will **NOT** reduce the way smoking harms your heart and circulation. A small number of cigarettes before and after shift will make your blood chemistry abnormal and put you at risk of heart disease.

Alternatively, you could free yourself from nicotine addiction altogether by:

2 SMOKING CESSATION

To be successful, you'll need to **decide** to be a non-smoker. One puff of a cigarette strongly reinforces the addiction. Talk to your GP about Zyban. Or use NRT (nicotine replacement therapy), it will **DOUBLE** your chance of success. If you use help from Quitline 137-848 it will **DOUBLE** your chances again.

All staff can get access to **Free NRT plus Quitline**. Staff can get NRT at cost price any time during the year. Look at the Smoke Free Health Care website on the NCAHS Intranet for more details (scroll down on left-hand side of Intranet home page).

**NORTH COAST
AREA HEALTH SERVICE
NSW HEALTH**

**Quitline
137848**



Remove smoking paraphernalia

Cigarette butt bins/ashtrays should be completely removed from all areas where smoking is not permitted by the time the site goes smoke free.

Any collections of cigarette butt litter should also be removed before the site goes smoke free. Collections of cigarette butt litter may send a message to someone who smokes “others smoke here, it is OK for you to smoke here too”.

Cigarette butt-bins

Purpose built cigarette butt bins should be provided in areas where smoking is permitted under the policy. If the site is going totally smoke free, butt bin(s) should be placed at the workplace entrance(s). Otherwise butt bin(s) should also be placed in the designated smoking area on site.

Cigarette butt bins indicate people can smoke in the adjacent area and subsequently tend to attract smokers. This needs to be considered when placing butt bins around the site. If a workplace does not want people smoking in a particular area or secondhand smoke to affect others nearby, a butt bin should not be placed there.

Once the policy has been implemented and the workplace is smoke free, maintenance and review becomes critical.



Maintenance and Review

What needs to happen following the implementation of the smoke free workplace policy?

Monitoring compliance and compliance management

People will generally comply with smoke free policies once they are implemented. However, a small percentage of people can be expected to 'test' what will happen by smoking in a smoke free area. In the majority of cases, these people will move or extinguish their cigarette once they are spoken to.

As soon as the policy is implemented it is important for those who are found smoking in a smoke free area to receive an invitation to comply with the policy. To establish a high-level of compliance early it may be useful for managers, grounds staff or security staff to regularly walk around the site in the weeks and months following policy implementation to monitor compliance and invite those smoking in a smoke free area to comply.

Following the initial 'compliance blitz' it remains important to monitor compliance and establish some longer-term compliance management strategies. If this is not undertaken, the changed smoking behaviours of staff and others can revert back to the norms prior to the implementation of the policy. As detailed earlier in this document, compliance management is critical to ensure that the change process is not undermined and ultimately defeated.

It should also be noted however that the occasional instance of non-compliance does not mean the policy is a failure – it is unrealistic to expect 100% compliance all of the time. It would be an exceptional outcome if this was achieved though.



Performance and compliance review

It is critical that performance and compliance is reviewed regularly. This would be best done by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee at most workplaces.

It is recommended that Occupational Health and Safety Committees conduct yearly smoke free site reviews or build reviews into existing site inspections. A template similar to the one North Coast Area Health Service has used for this purpose is an Appendix. The committee can then coordinate a response to any issues identified by the review, or throughout the remainder of the year.

Strategies to address potential issues are also outlined in the Appendix.

Information for staff

The supports for staff who smoke should be continually promoted on staff noticeboards, workplace Intranet, during staff health initiatives and or via any other relevant opportunities.

Information about the policy and the supports available to staff who smoke should also be included in workplaces' recruitment and advertising, and orientation materials.

Additional information and resources

For more information or resources regarding the implementation of a smoke free workplace policy see:

- Guidance note on the elimination of environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace, Commonwealth of Australia National Occupational Health & Safety Commission
<http://www.ascc.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/7479E22B-EC1D-41D2-B939-657775661681/0/GNNOHSC30192003.pdf>



- Passive smoking in the workplace, WorkCover NSW
http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Publications/OHS/SafetyGuides/pages/passive_smoking_policy_control_guide.aspx
- The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke – A report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/>
- Smoke-free workplaces at a glance, World Bank
<http://www1.worldbank.org/tobacco/AAG%20SmokeFree%20Workplaces.pdf>
- Addressing smoking in community service organisations – A policy toolkit, Cancer Council NSW
http://www.nswcc.org.au/html/prevention/smoking_tobacco/tacklingtobacco/downloads/addressing_smoking_toolkit.pdf
- Smoke free health care – staff outcomes evaluation report, North Coast Area Health Service
<http://www.ncahs.nsw.gov.au/index.php?pageid=3440&siteid=142>
- Procedure for Management of Staff Non-compliant with Smoke Free Policy, North Coast Area Health Service
<http://www.ncahs.nsw.gov.au/index.php?pageid=667&siteid=142>
- NSW Health for smoking related signage, posters and brochures at:
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/healthpromotion/tobacco/resources.asp>
- Butt Out Australia for cigarette butt bins (1800 358 258)
<http://www.buttoutaustralia.com.au/>
- Protector Alsafe for outdoor 'no smoking signs' (132 832)
<http://www2.protectoralsafe.com.au/LocationsPortal.aspx>



Frequently asked questions by staff during the implementation of a smoke free workplace policy and appropriate responses

Question: *What if I don't want to quit smoking right now?*

Response:

We respect your personal choice to continue to smoke. We just expect that you don't smoke during work-hours. There are [detail supports] available to you to assist you not smoke while you are at work.

Question: *What happens if I get hurt because you're making me go to the site's boundary to smoke from now on?*

Response:

If you choose to smoke during your award breaks you are covered by the same compensation opportunities as another staff member who chooses to walk outside the premises to undertake another activity during their break.

Question: *What about my right to smoke?*

Response:

It is your choice to continue smoking during your award breaks and personal time. We are introducing this policy to protect the health and well-being of staff and others visiting this site. They have the right to a safe environment free from secondhand tobacco smoke.

Note: In the United States there is no constitutional right to smoke.⁸ In Canada, the 'right to smoke' was contested in court by a number of patients in a psychiatric hospital. The court could find no basis for a specific 'right to smoke' but noted considerable legislation indicating a right to a hazard-free workplace and environment.⁹



Feedback

If you implement a smoke free policy at your workplace we would appreciate your feedback on the usefulness of this guide and your experience implementing the policy. Please contact Health Promotion on (02) 6620 7500 to discuss further. We look forward to hearing from you!



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Appendix

Smoke Free Site Review Template for OH&S Committees

Occupational Health and Safety Committees are responsible for the ongoing review of staff, client and visitor compliance with [insert policy name/number].

This site review template must be completed by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee annually to monitor and evaluate compliance with the policy and identify where improvements can be made. Completed site review documentation should be forwarded to the site's executive staff by [insert date].

Recommended remedial actions that can be implemented are also provided in this document.

SITE:

DATE:

SITE REVIEW COMPLETED BY:

.....
.....



Site Review Inspection

CHECKLIST	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Smoking on site			
<p>Is there evidence of smoking on site?</p> <p>(Look for cigarette butt litter and people smoking on site)</p>			
<p>If there is evidence of smoking on the grounds, is it most likely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Visitors or clients? ~ Staff? ~ Others? (Please specify) 			
Signage			
<p>Are all smoke free perimeter signs/ground stencils in good condition?</p> <p>Are there any newly constructed buildings/areas that require additional smoke free signage?</p>			



CHECKLIST	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Supports for staff who smoke?			
Do staff have easy and timely access to supports for smoking cessation or abstinence while on shift?			
Is there information about the available supports for staff who smoke on staff OH&S notice board(s)?			
New staff			
Are new staff routinely given information about the smoke free policy and the supports that are available to staff that smoke?			



CHECKLIST	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Previous Review			
Have the recommendations made at the last review been implemented?			
How many recommendations were made?			
How many recommendations were implemented?			



Suggested Problem Solver

PROBLEM	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
Smoking on site	
Presence of cigarette butt litter suggests non-compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase signage • Consider other measures to make problem areas less attractive to people who smoke, for example, remove seating • Increase surveillance of the particular area • Increase efforts to engage with people smoking on site and inform them of the policy • Regularly remove cigarette butt litter as litter sends a message to people who smoke that it is 'OK to smoke in this area' • Regular monitoring to measure any improvement or further deterioration
Where cigarette butt litter is located should indicate what group of people is likely smoking on site:	
Staff non-compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure managers are following guidelines on managing staff who are non-compliant with the policy • Increase surveillance of the particular area • Communicate to staff the importance of complying with the policy and the consequences of non-compliance
Visitor or client non-compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise some targeted awareness raising activity – letters, flyers • Increase efforts to engage with people smoking on the grounds and inform them of the policy • Increase signage • Ongoing monitoring to measure any improvement or further deterioration



Compliance Management

Signage	
<p>Signs are a valuable compliance management tool</p> <p>Faded ground stencils and damaged signs give the impression that the policy is 'old' and may encourage people to be non-compliant</p> <p>Increasing ground stencils is a good strategy to improve compliance because they are inexpensive and can be painted in many areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase signs for newly constructed buildings/areas• Replace/fix stolen or vandalised signs• Regularly re-paint ground stencils that are in areas of high traffic and prone to fading to keep message fresh
Supports for staff who smoke	
<p>If staff are not provided with supports to quit smoking or abstain from smoking while on shift this may affect compliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address any barriers to staff easily accessing supports to quit or abstain from smoking while on shift• Promote supports for staff on staff OH&S notice board(s)• Routinely promote the opportunity for staff to access supports during staff meetings
New staff	
<p>It is important as staff turn-over following the implementation of the policy that compliance is not compromised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information about the policy and supports for staff who smoke should be provided during the recruitment advertising and orientation process