

Workplace Tobacco Control Policy

Rationale

Tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke is hazardous to our health. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4000 chemical compounds, a large number of which are known carcinogens in both humans and animals, or are otherwise toxic to living organisms. Secondhand smoke spreads, stays in the air a long time, and can also interact with other occupational hazards, further increasing the danger to health. It is known that the smoke from the burning end of a non-filtered cigarette has higher concentrations of hazardous substances than the mainstream smoke inhaled by the person smoking.

Some 25 per cent of adults 20 years of age and older in Simcoe Muskoka smoke (CCHS, 2005). This is higher than the provincial average of 22%. Also alarming is that 680 people will die each year in Simcoe Muskoka from smoking related diseases such as lung cancer, heart disease, stroke and chronic lung disease (CCHS, 2003 & HELPS Mortality data, 2000/2001). These deaths are unacceptable and totally preventable!

From a business perspective, according to the Conference Board of Canada (2006), it costs employers \$3,396 per year more to employ someone who smokes. These costs are calculated based on increased absenteeism (smokers are absent 2.0 more days per year than non smokers, CCHS, 2004), and increased non-scheduled breaks (smokers spend about 40 minutes more on non-scheduled breaks every day consuming cigarettes outside sanctioned rest time).

Annual Estimated Cost Per Employee Who Smokes

Cost Factor	Cost
Increased Absenteeism	\$323.00
Decreased Productivity	\$3,053.00
Smoking Area Costs	\$20.00
TOTAL	\$3,396.00

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, which came into effect May 31, 2006, made all public places and workplaces 100 per cent smoke free. With this provincial legislation, all employers and employees will be protected from secondhand smoke exposure inside their workplaces and workplace vehicles. This is a positive step towards protecting employers and employees from secondhand smoke exposure.

However, there still is room for improvement. As people smoke outside, close to building entrances and exits, windows or ventilation systems, others will continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke. Additionally, the provincial legislation does not protect *all* workers who may perform their work duties in the private homes of clients who smoke.

Given the wide-ranging societal, human and economic costs of tobacco use, it is critical that efforts be made to impact on both the rate of tobacco product use, as well as the involuntary exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke. The requirement to protect workers cannot be ignored. Workplaces that implement smoke-free policies that extend beyond our provincial legislation are taking a protective, positive step towards supporting and protecting the health of their employees.

If your workplace wants to be a leader in its class and community, it can take the next step and develop a policy making the grounds 100 per cent smoke free. Presently in Simcoe Muskoka, there are several employers who have such policies, and many more are beginning to develop them.

Employers have also begun to recognize the importance of supporting employees to quit by offering financial support to access quit smoking aids, programs, and information and even holding promotional events with incentives like “quit contests.” Such policies, combined with the new provincial legislation, have the added benefit of encouraging and supporting tobacco users to quit, and those who continue to smoke to reduce their consumption.

The most effective workplace tobacco control policies have three components:

1. A tobacco control policy
2. Protection for all employees no matter their work setting
3. Support for smoking cessation

The bottom line: Health Canada identifies five key reasons for introducing smoking restrictions at the workplace:

1. Better health
2. Better business
3. Complying with legislation
4. Employee satisfaction
5. Avoiding litigation

Considerations

- Identify the legal requirements of your specific workplace under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Put policies into place that will ensure you are in compliance with the law.
- Consider whether your company will support employees to quit by reimbursing them for the cost of cessation aids and programs.
- Brainstorm other ways to limit exposure to dangerous secondhand smoke, as well as reduce the amount of tobacco products consumed at your workplace.
- Remove ashtrays, and any other smoking paraphernalia that are on your property. By moving these to either a designated smoking area outdoors, or by removing them from your property completely, people will change where they smoke.
- Review and revise your smoke-free workplace policy yearly so that it will be reflective of any changes in federal, provincial or municipal legislation.

Ideas

- Take a comprehensive approach to tobacco control. Develop or update your workplace tobacco control policy to include the restrictions found not only in current legislation, but also smoking outside at entranceways, or even better yet, on workplace property.
- Extend the same protection that is provided to home health-care workers by the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to *all* employees when they are providing services in a client’s home.
- Comprehensive approaches not only limit places where people come into contact with secondhand smoke, but they also provide support and resources to those people who may want to quit, or who are having difficulty managing their tobacco addiction now that they are more limited in places they can smoke. Create a policy that supports employees by:
 - Offering reimbursement for costs of off-site smoking cessation programs.
 - Offering coverage or reimbursement for quit smoking aids such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy, or quit smoking medications.
 - Organize contests and incentives for people to quit using tobacco products, or for non-tobacco users who support people who want to quit.
 - Make smoking cessation programs available to employees on-site.
 - Have self-help resources available for employees who smoke (pamphlets, booklets, access to online resources).

Workplace Tobacco Control Policies

The following are the most effective policy options to protect employees and others from the hazards of secondhand smoke, and to ensure your company is not unknowingly doing business with the tobacco industry. Research has shown that these methods protect workers 100 per cent, will satisfy occupational health and safety laws (if rigorously enforced) and help to desocialize the presence of tobacco use in our society.

What is legislated by the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*:

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act was implemented on May 31, 2006. The act prohibits smoking in any enclosed workplace and public place to protect workers and the public from the hazards of secondhand smoke.

Steps you can take to go above and beyond the minimal requirements of the legislation:

- **Suggestion 1:** A total ban on smoking on all workplace property, or at minimum, restrict the location of smoking areas outdoors (no smoking at least 9 metres within any window, door and intake vent).
- **Suggestion 2:** Enhance existing policies to ensure all employees are protected from secondhand smoke while on the job. For example, when workers enter a private home to perform their job, they have the right to be protected from exposure to SHS.
- **Suggestion 3:** Demonstrate corporate responsibility by having a policy that refuses any sponsorship from, and business with, tobacco companies.

Suggestion 1: Sample Policy – Smoke-free Property (Adapted from “Towards a Healthier Workplace: A Guidebook on Tobacco Control Policies, Sample Policy #1)

Purpose

ABC Company is committed to providing a smoke-free working environment. There is recognition that secondhand smoke is a significant health hazard and smoke-free environments both protect the health of the employees and have a positive impact upon cessation efforts. In order to eliminate hazards and ensure a safe, healthy workplace, the ABC Company, buildings and properties, shall be entirely smoke-free, effective _____.

Policy

All buildings, offices and vehicles owned or leased by the ABC Company are declared to be “smoke free areas” in accordance with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*.

In addition to the legislation, use of tobacco products is also prohibited on all outdoor property belonging to the company. Appropriate signage will be posted at key locations in the parking lot, and at entranceways. Copies of this policy will be distributed to all employees.

All visitors to ABC Company are to be asked to observe the no-smoking policy while conducting business on company property.

Those employees who smoke and would like to take this opportunity to quit using tobacco products are invited to participate in the cessation supports being offered by ABC Company. Additional information about these supports is available from the Human Resources Department.

The success of this policy will depend on the thoughtfulness, consideration and cooperation of all employees of ABC Company. We all share responsibility for adhering to this policy.

Signature of CEO or President

Suggestion 2: Sample Policy – Protection from Secondhand Tobacco Smoke

Purpose

Company ABC is committed to providing a tobacco-free working environment for all employees, volunteers and students. This policy extends the same protection that the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (2006) provides to home healthcare workers, to all Company ABC employees when providing services in clients' homes.

Policy

All employees have the right to ask a person not to smoke in their presence while they are providing services.

When a person refuses to comply with the request not to smoke, employees have the right to leave a location due to the presence of secondhand smoke without providing further services – unless doing so would present an immediate, serious danger to the health of any person.

Procedure

When an employee is making arrangements to provide services in a client's home, the client will be informed that there must be no use of tobacco products by anyone in the home during the time that the services are being provided. If there is evidence of active smoking in the home at the time of the visit, the employee has the right to leave.

If a person refuses to comply with the request not to smoke, the employee will follow the following procedure:

1. Notify their supervisor/manager within 30 minutes, or as soon as reasonably possible of the following if applicable:
 - a. That the worker has left;
 - b. Whether an appropriate person is present and available to care for the person to whom the services were being provided or were to be provided;
 - c. If the person to whom the services were being provided or were to be provided would require services in the next 24 hours;
 - d. In what situation the person to whom the services were being provided or were to be provided was when the employee left; and
 - e. Whether there are any unusual circumstances and if so, what they are.
2. In cases involving service coordination, the employee needs to notify appropriate agencies as soon as possible that the service was not performed, if applicable.
3. In cases of ongoing service disruptions, the employee is to work with the client to find viable solutions (change of location, etc), if applicable.

Signature of CEO or President

Suggestion 3: Sample Policy – Corporate Policy on the Exclusion of Tobacco Industry Sponsorship

Purpose

Tobacco industry products will kill one out of every two long term users. That's a death rate of 50 per cent. This epidemic is courtesy of a "legal" industry selling a "legal" product. Its legitimacy was established more than 50 years ago, before research unequivocally showed that tobacco was a killer. We now know that while it may be a legal product the industry is not ethical or moral.

It is important to know that the tobacco industry continually attempts to buy legitimacy by providing corporate sponsorship funds and donations.

By refusing to accept sponsorship from the tobacco industry and any company doing business for or with the tobacco industry, you are refusing to align your company with an industry whose strategies and tactics divert attention from the truth about their products.

Policy

Throughout the process of securing corporate sponsorship, Company ABC must retain its credibility in the eyes of the public. Potential risks associated with corporate sponsorship may include: loss of credibility should the public view the sponsor as inappropriate; perceptions of favouritism to sponsors in the application of legislative duty; perceptions of conflict of interest.

The Company ABC will consider a corporate sponsor where the moral integrity and interests of the sponsor are aligned with interests of the Company ABC and the image of Company ABC is maintained or enhanced.

Sponsorship may occur in many ways: a financial donation, production of materials, free or at-cost distribution of materials, publicity, meeting space, prizes, supplies, equipment or food, expertise or organizing special events.

Procedure

When seeking sponsorship for Company ABC initiatives, staff must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- The message conveyed through the sponsorship or provision of product or services is compatible with the intent of the project.
- The sponsorship agreement is consistent with the policies, practices or objectives of the Company ABC and of the project.
- The corporate sponsor is in good public standing and their product or service is not seen to be in conflict with the mandate of Company ABC.
- Acceptance of sponsorship from a company, whether a financial contribution or products or services will in no way interfere with or influence Company ABC.
- The Company ABC will exclude the tobacco industry and companies that work with or support the tobacco industry from any form of sponsorship.

Signature of CEO or President

Suggestion 4: Sample Policy for Inclusion in Purchasing Agreements

Rationale

Why not to do business with companies that do business with the tobacco industry?

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By refusing to do business with companies that do business with the tobacco industry, you protect your company's moral integrity from being aligned with an industry whose products are the leading cause of preventable death in Canada.

The following is a sample clause to be included in all Requests for Proposals, Quotations, and Tenders.

Name of business will not accept quotes, tenders or proposals from companies that have tobacco industry clients (including tobacco company subsidiaries).

Workplace Options for Employers Who Want to Support their Employees to Quit Smoking

Workplaces have a variety of approaches and options to help employees quit smoking. Smoking cessation supports can be offered as part of a workplace wellness program, but they can also be offered on their own. Offering cessation supports in combination with a tobacco control policy underlines the employers' commitment to employee health.

Workplace smoking cessation approaches:

Comprehensive: This approach involves offering programs and activities at the workplace. Employees can access the supports on-site, and often during work time.

Facilitated: This approach involves working with outside agencies to deliver programs and activities off-site, and providing self-help materials.

Information giving: Providing employees with information including self-help materials.

Smoking cessation options include:

- Self-help materials
- Brief, Professional Advice
- Individual Counselling
- Group Programs
- Quit Smoking Medications
- Incentives, contests, and special events

The HOW of Quitting Smoking in the Workplace

1. Understand the process of quitting smoking: smoking is a serious addiction that requires several attempts.
2. Develop a Plan:
 - Set goals and objectives
 - Make an inventory of available resources
 - Conduct a needs assessment of employees
 - Decide who should be involved
 - Choose your activities
 - Communicate well
 - Evaluate!
3. Deal with Barriers: Some employees are not ready to quit, live with people who smoke, or may have managers who are not supportive of what they are experiencing.

For more resources and support for developing workplace policies, and in providing cessation supports and resources, please see below:

Resource Name	How to Access
<i>Employer's Smoking Cessation Guide</i>	http://www.endsmoking.org/resources/employersguide/pdf/employersguide-2nd-edition.pdf
Health Canada: <i>Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A guide to helping your employees quit smoking</i>	http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/cessation-renoncement/index-eng.php
Health Canada: <i>Towards a Healthier Workplace</i>	http://hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/work-trav/index-eng.php
<i>Smoking and the Bottom Line: Updating the Costs of Smoking in the Workplace</i> (The Conference Board of Canada, August 2006).	http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.asp?rnext=1754