

Smoke and Vapour-Free Offices Policy

Reviewed Date		Number	OP0103
Revised Date	April 24, 2025	Approved Date	February 26, 1986

Introduction

Smoking, whether from direct exposure or secondhand smoke (SHS) is a well-documented health risk that contributes to premature death and a variety of health conditions. Research shows that there is no safe level of smoking or SHS exposure.

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), which operate by heating e-liquids to create an aerosol, do not produce harmless water vapour. They release a mixture of harmful chemicals and particles. Nicotine exposure through vaping carries significant health risks, particularly in the long term, with potential damage to the heart and lungs.

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit endeavors to provide, maintain and promote working environments that safeguard the health and welfare of its employees, students, and volunteers by maintaining these environments free from smoking and vaping. Smoke and vapour free environments protect health, and promote healthy role modeling to youth, and support ongoing efforts to encourage smoking cessation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) Board of Health members, employees, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and members of the public of their obligations regarding smoking and vaping on SMDHU properties and while conducting SMDHU business and to provide protection from SHS and e-cigarette vapour in all SMDHU office environments and on SMDHU properties.

Legislative Authority

Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (1990)
Smoke-Free Ontario Act (2017)

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

Employee: includes all full-time, part-time, contract, temporary, or casual staff.

Supervisor: the person to whom the employee directly reports or in the absence of the direct supervisor, another management representative of the SMDHU.

Secondhand smoke: the smoke produced by burning tobacco and/or other smoked products or exhaled by a person using the product that is inhaled involuntarily by a non-user. SHS also includes toxins that persist in the environment long after smoking has ended and is often referred to as third hand smoke.

Secondhand vapour: exhaled vapour, fog, mist, steam, or noxious gas, diffused through or suspended in the air produced by the heating of a liquid, which may or may not contain nicotine, by an e-cigarette or vapourizer, or similar device. The vapour is inhaled involuntarily by someone who is not using the device.

Smoke and Vapour free environment: An environment where smoking and vaping activities are prohibited ensuring the area remains free from the usage of any type of tobacco, e-cigarettes and/or other products as defined in this policy.

Nicotine and Commercial Tobacco products: any product containing, made from, or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, regardless of method of use (e.g.: chewed, smoked, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, or ingested). This includes but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, beedis, shisha, chew, snuff, and snus. It also encompasses all forms of nicotine products including electronic cigarettes, mods, nicotine cartridges and any related products. This does not include nicotine replacement therapy.

Policy

In order for SMDHU to satisfy its obligations under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and ensure the protection of its employees, the use of tobacco, tobacco-like products, e -cigarettes and the smoking of other products is prohibited in all buildings, offices, and vehicles owned or leased by the SMDHU. Smoke-free outdoor grounds will be negotiated as required via Human Resources and Infrastructure Services.

Exclusions and accommodations to this policy can include medically prescribed products and for those products used in cultural practices. In these instances, the individual or groups making a request to be accommodated or excluded to the policy shall make the request to their respective supervisor.

All employees, students, and volunteers of the health unit are encouraged not to smoke, vape or use other nicotine or commercial tobacco products, while on work time. This does not include nicotine replacement therapy.

Procedures

1. Vice President, program managers and supervisors are required to orient staff to this policy and the expectations for staff conduct. Staff are encouraged to reinforce this policy with other staff, students, volunteers, visitors, contractors, and suppliers.

Complaints Procedure

1. Staff members are encouraged to promote and reinforce the Smoke and Vapour-Free Grounds Policy in their interactions with other staff and the public and to address identified non-compliance with the policy directly with the individual(s) involved.
2. Complaints regarding noncompliance with the policy by staff, students or volunteers should be directed to one's own supervisor or manager for follow-up.
3. That supervisor/manager will work with HR and the supervisor or manager of the individual who is non-compliant to reinforce the policy.

Related Policies

HR0506 Access to Tobacco Product Cessation Supports

HS0110 Protection from Secondhand Smoke and E-Cigarette Vapour

Related Forms

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

Revised March 2007

September 2010 Policy re-numbered, previous number B2.010

Revised – October 25, 2017

Revised-April 24, 2025