

How - to
make your establishment
Tobacco-Free



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Tobacco-Free

Going Tobacco-Free has numerous benefits for Employers, Employees, and Patrons. The ultimate goal is for your establishment to be 100% Tobacco-Free, which prohibits the use of all Tobacco products on your premises. The steps required for this process are long-term and may prove to produce difficulties, however, the consequential health and economic benefits are much farther reaching. The Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) want to empower you to go Tobacco-Free by providing free resources for employer tobacco cessation education and employee tobacco cessation.

Why Go Tobacco-Free?

Tobacco-use costs businesses billions of dollars each year in productivity loss, healthcare benefits, disabilities, liability issues, fires, insurance coverage, and cleanliness¹. Workplace productivity losses due to tobacco in Florida are estimated to be \$4.4 billion annually². Nationally, smokers cost businesses \$27 billion annually in productivity losses due to a 75% increase in lost production time³. This correlates to a \$1,760/yr loss in productivity per employee⁴. Add \$1,623/yr for excess medical costs, and smokers cost companies \$3,383 more annually than non-tobacco using employees. But what does this mean to you?

For starters, employees using tobacco are absent from work twice as often⁵, require disability more often, and recover more slowly⁶. Lawsuits concerning Secondhand smoke are becoming increasingly more prevalent and successful⁷. Cleaning expenses are reduced on average by 10% due to the elimination of Second- and Thirdhand smoke⁸. And finally, companies that have gone Tobacco-Free have decreased employee health benefit costs¹.

Upon acceptance of a Tobacco-Free workplace policy, both you and your employees can enjoy increased health and financial benefits through increased productivity, decreased medical expenses, and boosted morale. Initiating a policy

towards healthier living through elimination of Tobacco will show you care for your employees and your community.

Steps to Success

Create a Deadline

Once you have decided to make your business Tobacco-Free, create a working deadline as to when you plan for Tobacco products to be banned from your premises. Studies suggest that a deadline should be made for 6-12 months after notification of your companies' intent to go Tobacco-Free. Choose a meaningful date that has importance for your establishment. During this time you should appoint upper management employees with the responsibilities of understanding why your company has decided to go Tobacco-Free, where tobacco-use is most prevalent, and how to answer the concerns of your employees and patrons. It is important that these Tobacco-Free officials consist of both smokers and nonsmokers if possible. Also, realize that many of your tobacco-using employees may require tobacco cessation programs and specialists. These programs are free through Florida AHEC and include Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), group meetings, and help lines. Also, an employee of yours can be trained to be a tobacco cessation facilitator at no cost. Visit AHECTobacco.com for more information.

Write a Policy

Now that you have chosen a deadline date, it is time to draft a policy to address the regulations of your Tobacco-Free movement. It is important that your policy is clear and concise so there is no confusion for your employees. Including a map is a great way to avoid misinterpretation. Listen to the concerns of your employees and understand their viewpoints. But remember, as the head of a

business you have two main responsibilities: 1) to follow federal and state mandates, and 2) to provide a safe work environment for you employees. The Florida Clean Indoor Air Act (Chp. 386, F.S.) states, “a person may not smoke in an enclosed workplace,” however, an owner has the right to choose whether smoking or any other tobacco-related acts are allowed on company property, including company vehicles and satellite worksites.⁹ Also, the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 maintains it to be the duty of the employer “to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women.”¹⁰

As you are drafting the regulations and standards your policy will represent, remember you and your management staff must be able to enforce them. Incentives and disincentives are effective tools for enforcing your policy. Also, remember that dismissal for being a tobacco-user is a discriminatory act. However, termination for insubordination in regards to policy regulation and selective hiring in regards to the exclusion of tobacco-users are not. Secondhand smoke (residual smoke from a lit cigarette or exhale), Thirdhand smoke (chemical and smell contamination made by cigarettes), and extraneous tobacco residues can affect the health of your employees and patrons. Prohibiting all three from your property is just as important as prohibiting tobacco-use. Creating incentives for both quitting tobacco-users and nontobacco-users will help to boost morale leading to a healthier, happier, and more productive work staff. Be sure to make your policy public and have the resources needed to address any questions or concerns. A sample policy can be found in your Tobacco-Free Businesses folder.

Notify Your Staff and Patrons

Your deadline has been decided and your policy has been written; now you must inform your employees and patrons. Make available your reasons for going Tobacco-Free and educate those willing to listen on the health and financial benefits they will be receiving. Flyers, newsletters, and paycheck inserts are all great ways to disseminate information. Be sure to have your Tobacco-Free

officials ready to intercept and address any concerns employees and patrons may have. Have your officials point out tobacco-related acts that will be future infractions to create examples. Do not alienate or intimidate tobacco-users, simply keep employee safety and well-being a main priority.

Research Insurance Plans

It is time to figure out how much money you can save in employee health benefits and property insurance. Contact your current and other providers to learn about programs they may have for Tobacco-Free businesses. Give them the full details as to how many of your staff members will be Tobacco-Free, what kind of tobacco cessation programs/information you will be providing them, and the extent to which you will be enforcing your policy. Lower insurance premiums will not only increase your budget, but will also be a great incentive for your employees to be Tobacco-Free.

Provide Cessation Support

Providing your tobacco-using employees with the best cessation resources will not only show the concern you hold for your employees, but it will also increase the probability of them quitting tobacco products all together. Florida AHEC can inform you on the free NRT and cessation programs in your area. You and your employees can call 1-888-5-GN-AHEC (1-888-546-2432) for more information about tobacco cessation. Also, hosting cessation groups and self-help training can be used to increase the number of attendees. Studies have shown that companies who provide cessation help reach a Benefit-to-Cost ratio of about 1 by the third year and 1.74 by year five¹¹. This means the reductions in medical costs and increases in productivity will pay for the price of company cessation programs in three years or less, and continue to increase the profits of your company in the continuing years. Increasing the chances for your tobacco-using employees to quit

by providing optimal cessation programs will only increase your company's net worth.

Monitor Your Provisions

Enforcing your policy is a task that should be appointed to your Tobacco-Free officials. Your policy will be a direct determinate of the repercussions your employees will have to face and you must follow the standards it provides. Making sure monitoring takes place during all working hours is important to avoid accusations of discrimination. It is also important to realize that Florida state laws allow smoking 25 feet away from any building, so your policy may not be lawfully backed, but that does not mean you cannot ask someone to stop using tobacco-products on your property. A great way to avoid confrontation is to have your Tobacco-Free officials hand-out business cards or care packages explaining this is a Tobacco-Free area and cessation programs are available to help them quit. And don't forget, incentives are a great way to not only get your employees to quit using tobacco, but to also increase productivity.

Conclusion

Overall, going Tobacco-Free has only positive results for you, your employees, and your business. Though the process may seem detailed and long, it is actually very simple considering the resources at your disposal. Tobacco-users are not bad people, nicotine addiction is a disease and you are simply trying to protect the well-being of your staff and patrons. Increase your businesses' value and improve the quality of life of your employees and patrons by becoming a leader in the fight against Tobacco; in doing so you may find yourself among good company.

Check out who has already gone Tobacco-Free¹²:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| AT&T | BASF Corporation |
| Bechtel | BF Goodrich Tire Manufacturing |
| Boeing | Bristol-Meyers Squibb |
| Calgon | Coca-Cola |
| Dow Chemical Company | Dunkin' Donuts |
| Dupont Chemical Company | Eli Lilly and Company |
| Federal Express | General Mills |
| Hain Celestial Foods | The Home Depot, Inc. |
| IBM | Johnson & Johnson |
| Kennecott Mining | International Truck and Engine Corporation |
| Lowe's Companies, Inc. | Marcal Paper Mills, Inc. |
| MCI Communications | Merk & Company |
| Moffit Cancer Center | Nestle Purina PetCare Company |
| Nike, Inc. | Proctor & Gamble |
| Prudential Financial | Scott Paper Company |
| Sharper Image | Starbucks |
| Subaru Auto Assembly Plant | Target Corporation |
| Texas Instruments, Inc. | Tyson Foods |
| Union Pacific | USF College of Medicine |
| Verizon | Westin Hotels |
| Tampa General Hospital | |

“USF Health is dedicated to improving the full spectrum of health—from the environment, to the community, to the individual.”

-USF Health

“By the end of the year, about 60 to 70 percent of healthcare organizations in the nation will be tobacco free”

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