



Help your employees
clear the air

Virginia Department of Health
Tobacco Use Control Project

(804) 864-7877
www.vdh.virginia.gov

Smoke-Free
WORKPLACE

VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
Protecting You and Your Environment

THE
Smoke-Free
WORKPLACE



Tobacco Use Control Project:
Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control,
Virginia Department of Health

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACES ARE GOOD BUSINESS



Going smoke-free sends a positive message to your employees. It says that your business truly cares about the health and safety of every person who works there.

Smoke-free air is especially important to those individuals who are pregnant, have heart disease, lung disease, asthma, or allergies.

Establishing a smoke-free environment ensures that employers, employees, and visitors will be protected from the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke is associated with an increased risk for lung cancer and coronary heart disease in non-smoking adults. It is also proven to be a cancer-causing agent in humans.

THE ADVANTAGES OF A SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

- Reduced direct health care costs. Businesses in the U.S. pay an average of \$2,189 in workers' compensation costs for smokers, compared with just \$176 for nonsmokers.
- Business owners can negotiate lower health, disability, and life insurance rates.
- Reduced absenteeism. While smokers miss an average of 6.16 days of work per year due to sickness, nonsmokers miss just 3.86 days.
- Office equipment, carpets, paint, and interior furnishings will last longer.
- Decreased risk of fires.

WHEN EMPLOYEES QUIT SMOKING, THEY'LL FEEL THE EFFECTS WITHIN ONE DAY

Within 12 hours, a quitter's pulse, blood pressure, and carbon monoxide

levels will return to normal. In two to three days, nicotine will leave the body. Within a few weeks, blood circulation will start to improve, and the quitter will be able to breathe easier.

In one year, the risk for coronary heart disease will be cut in half. In 10 years, the risk of dying from lung cancer will be cut in half. And within 15 years, the risk of coronary heart disease becomes equal to that of a nonsmoker.

STEPS TO ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE, WORKPLACE TOBACCO POLICY

1. Assess the current situation.
2. Decide on a new smoking policy and develop a plan to implement it.
3. Communicate with employees and management.
4. Announce and manage the policy.

To find out about smoking cessation programs in your area, call Quit Now Virginia's tobacco user quitline: at (800) QUIT-NOW.



For more information about Quit Now Virginia:

contact the Virginia Department of Health Tobacco Use Control Project at (804) 864-7877, or visit www.vdh.virginia.gov. Also available in TTY and Spanish.