



Tobacco – Free Parks and Outdoor Recreation Spaces

- **Outdoor recreational facilities and parks are established to promote healthy activities.** Their purpose is to promote community wellness; tobacco-free policies fit with this idea.
- **Secondhand smoke harms everyone.** Secondhand smoke is a human carcinogen for which there is no safe level of exposure. Exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate health consequences such as asthma attacks and other respiratory diseases.
- **Secondhand smoke is harmful in outdoor settings.** Evidence (James L Repace, [Outdoor Air Pollution from Secondhand Smoke](#) A report for the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) campus effort to address smoking ([CEAS](#)), June 2005) shows secondhand smoke levels in outdoor public places can reach levels as high as those found in indoor facilities where smoking is permitted.
- **Cigarette litter is dangerous.** Discarded cigarettes pollute the land and water and may be ingested by toddlers, pets, birds or fish.
- **Tobacco-free policies help change community norms.** Tobacco-free policies establish the community norm that tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults within the entire community.
- **Policies provide consistency among community athletic facilities and groups.** Most community sporting events are held at either municipal or school district athletic facilities. Tobacco use is prohibited on all school grounds. Also, many community athletic associations have policies but use municipal recreation facilities and would benefit from a municipal-wide policy.
- **Policies reduce litter and maintenance costs.** In a 2004 survey, 58% of Minnesota park directors in cities with policies reported cleaner park areas.
- **Tobacco-free environments promote positive community role modeling and protect the health, safety, and welfare of community members.**
- **Tobacco-free policies help break the connection between tobacco and sports.** For years the tobacco industry has sponsored sporting events and advertised at recreational events, misleading young people's perception of tobacco use. Research indicates that sporting events expose youth to extensive tobacco use by people they view as positive role models.
- **Municipal governments have a mandate to make policy respecting the health, well-being, safety and protection of persons; the safety and protection of property; persons, activities and things in, on or near a public place or place that is open to the public** [Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, 172 (1)]

Adapted from [Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota](#) -

Frequently Asked Questions:

Tobacco - Free Policies - Parks and Outdoor Recreational Spaces

What is the current provincial law in Nova Scotia on smoking outdoors?

The only place where outdoor smoking is not permitted is within four metres of an intake for a building ventilation system, an open window of a place of employment or an entrance to a place of employment.

Are local governments able to enact policies restricting tobacco use?

There is nothing in either federal or provincial law that prohibits local governments from regulating tobacco use outdoors. The Municipal Government Act (172.1) states that 172 (1) A council may make by-laws, for municipal purposes, respecting

- (a) the health, well being, safety and protection of persons;
- (b) the safety and protection of property;
- (c) persons, activities and things in, on or near a public place or place that is open to the public.

In the past it has been leadership from municipal units that has moved the provincial government to strengthen tobacco legislation.

What is the difference between a policy and a bylaw?

In general, parks and recreation policies are rules regarding municipally - owned property that are established by the Parks and Recreation Committee, and are often approved by the town/municipal council. Generally, those who ignore park policies do not receive a fine, but are asked to refrain from using tobacco or leave the premises.

Bylaws are council enactments that regulate people or property and carry a penalty such as a fine for violations. Bylaws often originate from a recommendation passed by the city park board.

For both park policies and city ordinances, tobacco use may be prohibited on city park property.

Should a policy cover all property and activities or just youth events?

In areas when such policies have been enacted, the trend is toward "all property" policies because they may be simpler for citizens to understand, rather than to determine which activities qualify as "youth events."

How do other municipal units deal with this issue?

To date, there are no other recreation departments or municipal governments that have initiated this type of policy. Increasingly in other parts of the country, most notably British Columbia and Ontario, municipal units are beginning to address the concern. The policies are becoming common in the United States. Minnesota, for example, has almost 100 towns that have policies on the books.

How are policies enforced?

Most cities and townships with tobacco-free park policies post signs in their park areas that announce the policy. (See Image 1) These signs provide cities with the ability to rely on community and self - enforcement. Many tobacco users look for “no tobacco” signs. These signs empower everyone using the parks to provide friendly reminders about the policy to violators. Signs also help to eliminate the need for any law enforcement presence.



Image 1

From

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/Choose+Health/Tobacco+Reduction/Tobacco+Free+Sports.htm>

In addition to signs, recreation departments notify their community members in a variety of ways: local media, city newsletters, policy reminder cards, recreation program brochures, policy statements sent to sports associations, and coaches’ trainings.

What effect do tobacco-free park policies have on youth?

Research has not been completed on this topic, however, tobacco-free policies can help prevent youth tobacco use, particularly by providing adults the opportunity to be tobacco-free role models throughout the community.

What other benefits result from tobacco free policies?

Cigarette filters are not biodegradable, meaning they do not decay and cannot be absorbed by the environment. A tobacco-free policy reduces park and beach litter and protects toddlers from ingesting filters that are discarded on the ground.

Will policies keep some people from using municipal outdoor recreational areas?

Tobacco-free policies for public park areas ensure that all citizens have a healthy recreational environment. People go to parks to exercise or relax, not to use tobacco. Smokers work, shop, travel, and reside in smoke-free environments every day.

Aren't tobacco-free policies for parks a needless regulation?

These policies are similar to those prohibiting alcohol and litter or requiring that pets be leashed. It is the duty of policy makers to enact policies that protect the health of their citizens.

Adapted from [Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota](#) -

Tobacco-Free Youth Recreation Initiative

Tobacco-Free Recreational Facilities

Rule:

~~(a) A person may not use any form of tobacco: (1) in a restroom, at a spectator or concession area, dog park, aquatic facility, or playground in any County park; or (2) within 100 yards of an organized activity at a County park.~~

(b) (1) "Organized activity" means an event that has a defined time for starting and ending and is in a designated or permitted area of a County park. "Organized activity" includes athletic events, concerts, and special events such as arts fairs. (2) "Park" includes recreational facility. (3) "Tobacco" to include but not be limited to cigarettes, cigars, snuff, pipes and spit tobacco.

Enforcement:

(a) Recreation and Parks staff shall post appropriate signage: (1) in restrooms, and at spectator and concession areas, dog parks, aquatic facilities, and playgrounds; and (2) in locations at which organized activities take place.

(b) Recreation and Parks staff shall notify community organizations and distribute brochures to park users.

(c) Recreation and Parks staff shall monitor compliance.

(d) For any person who violates the tobacco-free rule, Recreation and Parks staff shall request that the person cease the use of tobacco and give a verbal warning. If the person refuses to cease, staff authorized by the Director may request that the person leave the park.

(e) The tobacco-free rule shall otherwise be enforced as provided by the Anne Arundel County Code, Article 19, §2-301.

- The Department of Recreation and Parks has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of our community's children and adults while they use the County's recreation facilities, and adopting the Tobacco-Free policy is part of this responsibility.
- On average in Anne Arundel County, two people die each day from cancer and five more people are newly diagnosed with cancer. (Source: Maryland Cancer Registry)
- Secondhand smoke is harmful in both indoor and outdoor settings. Exposure to secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in America. Secondhand smoke levels in outdoor public places can reach levels as high as those found in indoor facilities where smoking is permitted.
- Almost 90% of adult smokers began to use tobacco at or before age 18. (Source: Campaign for for Tobacco-Free Kids)
- Tobacco-Free policies are public park policies similar to those prohibiting alcohol use or littering in public parks and recreational facilities.

Benefits of Anne Arundel County's Tobacco-Free Recreational Facilities

- Protects the health of youth and adults by eliminating exposure to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.
- Encourages youth not to start using tobacco products.
- Demonstrates that adults want youth to remain tobacco-free and provides youth with positive role models.

Tobacco - Free Policies – Parks and Outdoor Recreational Spaces

Canadian Initiatives / References:

British Columbia - Interior Health - Tobacco-Free Sport Initiative

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/Choose+Health/Tobacco+Reduction/Tobacco+Free+Sports.htm>

Town of New Tecumseth, ON: Effective 2005, smoking banned within 10 m of outdoor playground areas.

<http://www.theotn.org/GFG/bylaws/NewTecumseth.pdf>

Bylaws and Signage to Encourage Smoke-free playground parks and sport parks

<http://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/bpt/pubs/pdf/013s.pdf>

<http://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/bpt/pubs/pdf/013f.pdf>

Collingwood, Ontario: Effective September 2003, smoking banned in playground equipment zones (ie. area 25 m around playground equipment that includes swings, slides, swimming pool, etc) but does not include basketball, hockey, walking or biking trails".

<http://www.town.collingwood.on.ca/uploaddocuments/SmokingBy-lawPublic%20Places.pdf>

Collingwood is also located in the region of Simcoe Muskoka. The health unit has an office in Collingwood (705) 445-0804 email: hconnect@smdhu.org

In St. Albert, Alberta: smoking prohibited on the grounds of an outdoor public event

<http://www.stalbert.ca/admin/contentx/default.cfm?PagelD=81&hdrmenu=2>

City of St-Albert

780-459-1500

Email: stalbert@st-albert.net

The Corporation of Delta, BC (Sept. 2006)

http://www.corp.delta.bc.ca/EN/main/municipal/323/798/smoke_free.html

Moncton, New Brunswick has prohibited smoking in municipal parks - but it does not seem to be a bylaw

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/new-brunswick/story/2007/01/08/nb-smokingmoncton.html>