

TRAINING EMPLOYEES/ENFORCEMENT

Management's attitude toward enforcing a new smoke-free restaurant policy is generally the most important factor in implementing the change successfully. Since the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared secondhand smoke a Group A carcinogen in 1993, the National Cancer Institute and others have determined that restaurant workers are among the highest exposed occupational group.

An employer sends a clear message to employees by eliminating secondhand smoke in the workplace – that you care about the health and safety of those who work for you. In addition, managers are often relieved when a solid method for dealing with smoking in the workplace is clearly defined and employees no longer have to deal with conflicts between seating customers in smoking and nonsmoking sections.

Preparing Your Employees:

Staff preparation is one of the most important steps in ensuring a smooth transition to a smoke-free workplace. Follow these steps to make certain your employees understand the new law and are prepared to deal with the transition.

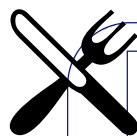
- Talk to employees to determine what attitudes are held about smoking in the workplace and how they feel about the new restrictions.
- Hold an informal meeting and provide refreshments. This will help employees feel comfortable sharing their feelings.
- Make sure that the general manager as well as the owner is present at all meetings, which will lend support to the importance of the effort.
- Remind employees that a positive mindset and message needs to be sent to customers in order for a smooth transition, and that this message has to be backed up 100% by them.
- Focus on the health aspects and benefits of going smoke-free. Do not focus on the smoker.

Communicate the new policy and provide information about the hazards of secondhand smoke to all employees, using as many strategies as possible:

Post this information:

- At employee meetings
- As payroll stuffers
- Notices on bulletin boards and in employee break rooms
- In newsletters

(sample materials for employees can be found in the Materials/Signage section of this handbook.)



Employees need to back the smoke-free message 100%, in order to ensure a smooth transition for customers.

- Involve employees in selecting clear and prominent locations on the property where smoke-free restaurant signage should be posted.
- Have employees wear various smoke-free buttons a few weeks before the law begins or once the new law starts. This will hopefully open the door for communication about the smoke-free policy.

Buttons could say:

- Just the date the new smoke-free law will be enacted, which would entice curious customers to ask questions about what the date means.
- This is a smoke-free workplace
- Smoke-free zone
- We're Going Smoke-Free!
- Smoke – free for health
- No smoking, please
- Thank you for not smoking

(Button samples can be found in the Materials/Signage section of this handbook.)



Capture your customer's attention by having employees wear buttons with the news that your restaurant or bar is going smoke-free.

How to talk to customers:

Train your employees about the basic facts of the law and what to say to customers in order to enforce the law.

- Some possible phrases to use with customers who wish to smoke are:

“I’m sorry, but you’ll have to put out your cigarette or move outside. This is in accordance with the new smoke-free law.”

“The law requires that no smoking be allowed inside the workplace. We appreciate your cooperation.”

“I’m sorry, but I have to ask you to smoke outside. This is a smoke-free establishment.”

- Employees can also be trained to inform customers of the new law upon their arrival or when taking customer’s orders. Such possible phrases to use are:

“I just want to remind everyone that this is now a smoke-free environment in accordance with the new law.”

“I want to thank everyone for not smoking. If you want to smoke, we have a designated area outside for you.”





Offer an outside alternative if one is available.

Enforcing the Law:

- Make sure each employee knows what he/she is responsible to do to be in compliance with the law. The following reasonable steps can be taken:
 - Politely request that the person smoking refrain from doing so in the restaurant or bar. Offer an outside alternative if one is available.
 - Refer to the employer's standard policy when dealing with behavioral problems. Employees should not, however, be forced to put themselves in any situation they feel is at all compromising.
 - All unresolved problems should be reported to the manager or owner, who has ultimate responsibility.
- Call your local health department or city code enforcement department for additional compliance support in your area.



Help Employees Who Smoke

The effect of implementing a smoke-free workplace policy will be most immediate for employees who smoke. Employees might be struggling with the sudden realization that they can no longer smoke on the job. At a minimum, smoking policies tend to result in a reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked.

When the policy is implemented, be sure to let smokers know that you appreciate their efforts to comply with the law, and ask nonsmoking employees to provide support and encouragement as well. Sometimes the message 'smoke-free' can unfortunately be misinterpreted to mean 'smoker-free' or 'anti-smoker'. Communication is important to dispel any misconceptions.

Providing cessation support is important because a smoke-free environment may encourage smokers to try to quit. However, it is important to reassure smokers that the company is not trying to stigmatize them, but instead trying to demonstrate their commitment for them by offering help. The workplace is an ideal environment in which to encourage smokers to quit because employees spend so much of their time there.

Voluntary agencies, health departments and national organizations are all available as resources to help smokers quit.

(Please refer to the Available Resources section of this handbook for contact information for organizations like the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association.)

Five Keys for Quitting

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "You Can Quit Smoking Consumer Guide" (www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit/canquit.htm) includes these five keys for quitting:

1. Get Ready
2. Get Support and Encouragement
3. Learn New Skills and Behaviors
4. Get Medication and Use it Correctly
5. Be Prepared for Relapse or Difficult Situations

