

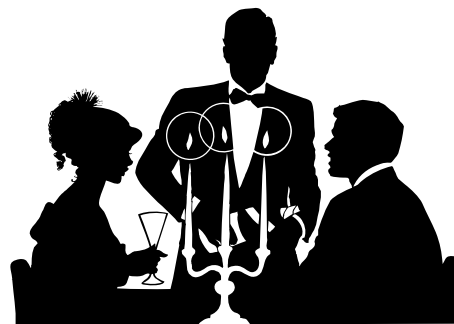
VOLUNTARILY SMOKE-FREE

As scientific evidence documenting the health hazards associated with secondhand smoke continues to mount, so do the reasons for protecting employees from exposure to these chemicals. Do not fear. Most smokers do not quit eating in their favorite restaurant when it goes smoke-free; they just quit smoking in it! Smokers light up in restaurants not because they have to, but because they are allowed to. Going smoke-free voluntarily might seem like a scary step, but it's one of the best things you can do for yourself, your employees, your customers and your business!

Creating A Smoke-Free Workplace:

There are a few steps you must first undertake before you make your restaurant smoke-free. This will ensure the smoothest transition possible for both your employees and your customers.

- Talk to your staff about your decision to go smoke-free. Make sure your employees are aware of why you are taking this step and what they need to do to enforce it. Make sure you give employees enough time to prepare for their new role and to adjust to the change. *(Please see the Training Employees/Enforcement section of this handbook for more information.)*
- The key factor in going smoke-free is how you make the change. Those who take a low-key approach do not fare as well as those who make a splash with it. You might think that using a cautious approach will offend fewer smokers, but being fearful of losing smokers and slowly and quietly banning smoking gets the word out to only one group of people: your current customers.
- Announce your new policy about two to three weeks before your implementation date. This will diffuse the concerns of most smokers by the time the conversion date rolls around.
- Prepare your property! Make sure you have gotten rid of all ashtrays, matchbooks and other smoking paraphernalia that would encourage smokers to light up. Create an outside smoking area if you so choose.



- Those who experience the greatest gain, are those who are the most vocal about their conversion to smoke-free. Make a splash with it!
 - Advertise your newly smoke-free restaurant in the local newspaper, in customer newsletters, with the local health clubs or in coupon books.
 - Post signs in your restaurant announcing the new smoke-free policy.
 - Hold a ‘newly smoke-free’ party! Alert customers and post signs with fun, catchy sayings: “Join us at (name of restaurant). . . we’re not blowing smoke!”
 - Brag about it. Have your employees wear pins with the date your new smoke-free policy will start.
- Talk to the media. Get a local reporter to write a story about your decision to go smoke-free. It is an excellent opportunity to alert your customers about the change, as well as to bring in potential new customers. Coinciding the story with a smoke-free party or event you are having will make the story more interesting and help attract customers to the event. *(Please see the Working With Customers section for help with party ideas and themes, also see the Working With the Media section for help with talking to reporters.)*
- Do not be afraid of controversy. Even complaints from some smokers will help spread the word to those who prefer smoke-free environments. But remember, even though many smokers themselves prefer smoke-free dining, do not needlessly upset your smoking clientele. Let smokers know they are valued customers too and that you want to keep them.
- Do not make the change on your busiest night of the year, like New Year’s Eve, Superbowl Sunday or other major holiday. A night like this is just too chaotic. It’s okay to start your new smoke-free policy on January 2 or some other day.



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