

Tobacco Free Outdoors - Frequently Asked Questions



What is the objective of the campaign?

The objective of this campaign is to educate New Yorkers about the benefits of tobacco free outdoor recreational areas. The campaign raises awareness of the environmental impact of tobacco litter, dangers of secondhand smoke and influence on children when tobacco use is not restricted.

Is there really a need for tobacco free outdoor policies?

Yes, these policies are similar to those prohibiting alcohol and litter or requiring that pets be leashed. Tobacco free outdoor policies protect the environment and the health and safety of people using recreational areas.

Why include all forms of tobacco?

All tobacco litter is poisonous to children, pets and wildlife.

Do tobacco free outdoor policies keep some people from using recreation areas?

People go to recreation areas to exercise or relax not to use tobacco. Tobacco users work, shop, travel, and reside in tobacco free places every day.

Will smokers comply with tobacco free outdoor policies?

As a result of clean air laws and tobacco policies, most tobacco users have become accustomed to restrictions. Signs posted at parks and beaches empower everyone using these recreation areas to support and enforce the policy through friendly reminders. Comprehensive policies include provisions to deal with persistent violators.

How do tobacco free outdoor policies at recreational areas affect youth tobacco use?

Children model adult behavior. When children see adults smoking in family friendly places, they see smoking as acceptable. Tobacco free policies help prevent youth tobacco use by showing adults as tobacco free role models throughout the community.

Are local governments able to enact policies restricting tobacco use?

United States Courts have declared that there is no legal "right to smoke" and smoking is not a protected activity under the U.S. Constitution. NYS law does not prohibit local governments from regulating tobacco use outdoors.

What other outdoor tobacco use restrictions exist in New York State?

Currently over 280 municipalities have enacted regulations to restrict tobacco use in outdoor recreational areas. View full list at www.tobaccofreenys.org/pdf/Parks-And-Rec-Areas-Tobacco-Policies-NY.pdf.

Hundreds of hospitals, libraries, college campuses, community agencies and religious organizations have implemented entryway bans and tobacco free grounds policies to support the health of their patrons.

Is there assistance for organizations that want to adopt tobacco free outdoor policies?

Yes, the Community Partnerships for a Tobacco Free New York can provide sample policies, signage and assistance to municipalities, businesses and community agencies interested in adopting entryway or outdoor tobacco use policies. Find your local partnership at <http://tobaccofreenys.org/Contacts-NY.html>.