



Tobacco Free Ohio State, Policy 7.20 Frequently Asked Questions

Why Adopt a Tobacco Free Ohio State Policy?

1. Why go tobacco free?

Ohio State strives to foster a healthy and productive environment for all students, faculty, staff, vendors, volunteers and visitors. Tobacco use negatively affects the entire community and compromises Ohio State's decades of investment in a preventive health portfolio.

2. Is there state and federal support for Ohio State becoming tobacco free?

The Ohio Board of Regents recently passed a resolution encouraging higher education institutions to become tobacco free. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is sponsoring a national initiative to eliminate tobacco use on college campuses. It is expected that more U. S. universities will work towards becoming tobacco free.

3. How does adopting a Tobacco Free Ohio State policy clean up the environment?

- Environmental tobacco exposes bystanders to numerous harmful chemicals.
- Cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world. 1.7 billion pounds of cigarette butts are littered worldwide each day.
- Cigarette butts are a fire hazard, increase university maintenance expenses and can be eaten by dogs, birds and other animals.
- Filters are non-biodegradable and can take 5-10 years to decompose.
- Chemicals (e.g. hydrogen, cyanide, arsenic, etc.) in cigarette butts leak into the soil and water.

4. Are students really at risk?

College is a critical time in young adult development during which many lifestyle habits are formed. We have an unprecedented opportunity to promote sustained healthy behaviors among students. In 2012, the Surgeon General reported that each day in the U.S., 3,800 young people under 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette and over 1,000 youth under age 18 become daily cigarette smokers.¹ Nearly 100% of adults who smoke daily started smoking when they were 26 or younger.

5. Why not allow people to smoke outdoors? Is there really a health risk?

Yes, there really is a health risk. The Surgeon General has found there is no safe level of second hand smoke. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, second-hand smoke contains more than 4,000 substances, several of which are known to cause cancer in humans and animals. As the university strives to become the healthiest university on the globe it is imperative that we consider the impact of tobacco on the health and wellbeing of our faculty, staff, students, vendors, volunteers and visitors.

What Is and Is Not Permitted?

6. What does having a Tobacco Free Ohio State policy mean?

The Tobacco Free Ohio State policy means that no tobacco use will be allowed on any Ohio State owned, operated and leased property. The university will not advertise or allow tobacco to be sold.

7. What is included in "tobacco?"

Tobacco is defined as all tobacco-derived or containing products, including and not limited to, cigarettes (e.g., clove, bidis, kreteks), electronic cigarettes, cigars and cigarillos, hookah smoked products, pipes oral tobacco (e.g., spit and spitless, smokeless, chew, snuff) and nasal tobacco (e.g. snus). It also includes any product intended to mimic tobacco products, contain tobacco flavoring or deliver nicotine other than for the purpose of cessation.

8. Is abstaining from tobacco a condition of employment at Ohio State?

The Tobacco Free Ohio State policy does not address tobacco use as a condition of employment.

¹ USDHHS (2012) Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults.



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9. Isn't it my right to use tobacco? Does Ohio State have the right to tell me I can't use tobacco products on campus property?

The university has a responsibility to establish policies that positively affect the health and wellbeing of all students, faculty, staff, vendors, volunteers and visitors. A Tobacco Free Ohio State policy does not prohibit tobacco use; it merely establishes where use can and cannot occur. Tobacco is legal for adults to purchase and consume.

10. Will it be OK to use smokeless tobacco, such as chew?

All forms of tobacco are prohibited. The health risks associated with "chew" as well as other smokeless tobacco products are well documented.

11. Will the use of hookahs and other devices for smoking tobacco be permitted?

Using hookahs or any other device to smoke tobacco is prohibited. Additionally, using hookahs to smoke non-tobacco products also is prohibited. Using hookahs and other devices promotes tobacco use as an acceptable behavior, which is not acceptable at Ohio State.

12. Are electronic-cigarettes (e-cigs) permitted?

E-cigs are not permitted. There is insufficient evidence that these devices positively affect smoking and they are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration as smoking cessation devices, therefore cannot be used on Ohio State property. They contain tobacco flavoring and so are prohibited under our policy. Using e-cigs promotes tobacco use as an acceptable behavior, which is not acceptable at Ohio State.

13. Can I use tobacco in my personal vehicle while on university property?

Parking lots and parking garages owned, operated and leased by Ohio State are covered by the policy. Tobacco use is prohibited in any vehicle parked on university owned, operated or leased property.

14. Does the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy apply at university sanctioned events or sporting activities occurring off campus property?

The Tobacco Free Ohio State policy applies only to university owned, operated and leased property. Events or activities scheduled elsewhere are bound by the policies or rules of the event coordinator or property manager.

15. Are people permitted to use tobacco products at tailgates, sporting events and social events that occur on Ohio State property?

Tobacco use is prohibited on university owned, operated and leased property. Ohio State recognizes that becoming tobacco free requires a culture shift and that it may take time for the community to adjust to the university's policy. We appreciate the support of the community as Ohio State strives to become the healthiest university on the globe. We encourage students, faculty and staff to take an active role in championing this effort by increasing awareness of the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy at events they may attend.

Options for Tobacco Users

16. Are there resources to help employees and students quit using tobacco?

Ohio State encourages and supports students, faculty and staff who request assistance in eliminating dependence on the use of tobacco products. A list of resources is available at hr.osu.edu/tobaccofree.

17. Can I go off campus during my breaks to smoke?

Yes. Employees can leave campus during scheduled breaks. Hourly staff should be mindful of the length of their breaks in accordance with their unit's attendance policy. Employees should not trespass, loiter or litter on public or private property to smoke during breaks. Please respect Ohio State's neighbors.

If you don't have time to walk off campus during your break, check out the cessation resources available to faculty, staff and student employees. Tobacco cessation services are covered through Ohio State's medical plans. Enrolled faculty and staff must pay the applicable out-of-pocket expenses based on the service received. Individuals that are not enrolled in an Ohio State medical plan should check with their own insurance companies for possible coverage. A list of resources is available at hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/720cessation.pdf.



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18. Can I extend my break or change the time of my break so I have time to walk off campus to smoke?

Breaks are usually timed to ensure business needs are met. The length and time of breaks cannot be changed to accommodate tobacco use. Refer to departmental policies and/or supervisors regarding options, if applicable. It is important to consistently and fairly apply policies and business practices.

If you don't have time to walk off campus during your break, check out the cessation resources available to faculty, staff and student employees. Tobacco cessation services are covered through Ohio State's medical plans. Enrolled faculty and staff must pay the applicable out-of-pocket expenses based on the service received. Individuals that are not enrolled in an Ohio State medical plan should check with their own insurance companies for possible coverage. A list of resources is available at hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/720cessation.pdf.

19. Am I able to attend tobacco cessation sessions during paid work time?

The university is supportive of tobacco users who desire to quit using tobacco products. Options for attending tobacco cessation sessions are based on the department's business needs and may include flexible scheduling in accordance with the university's [Flexible Work Policy](#) and use of leave time in accordance with the university's [Paid Leaves](#) and [Unpaid Leaves](#) policies. Submit these requests for a flexible schedule and/or leave in a timely manner and schedule the time in a manner that is least disruptive to the administrative unit. Keep in mind there are various types of cessation resources; approval for time away from work to participate in a cessation program is subject to approval by the employing unit.

Departments also may consider providing additional cessation resources and education to their faculty and staff.

20. What will the university do about people leaving the campus or going across the street into neighboring properties to smoke?

While the policy only applies to university owned, operated and leased properties, we ask that students, faculty, staff, volunteers, vendors and visitors help maintain a positive relationship with our neighbors and respect neighboring properties outside the campus. Leaving campus to use tobacco or smoke does not give anyone permission to litter, loiter or trespass on private or public property. Property owners have the right to enforce their boundaries. Ohio State is committed to monitoring the impact on adjacent properties as the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy is implemented.

Handling Concerns with Individuals Who Use Tobacco on Campus

21. How will Ohio State enforce the tobacco free policy?

The university's vision for the enforcement of the tobacco free campus policy is one in which a tobacco free campus is viewed as the shared responsibility of all those in the campus community, tobacco users and non-users alike.

Individuals are encouraged and empowered to respectfully inform others about the policy in an ongoing effort to support individuals to be tobacco free, improve individual health and encourage a culture of compliance; however, substantiated chronic violations are subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

22. How will the university handle employees who do not want to stop the use of tobacco products?

Faculty, staff and students are not required to stop using tobacco products; however, they will not be permitted to use tobacco products on any university property. Similar to regulations which prohibit smoking indoors, individuals must find ways to manage their need for nicotine in ways that do not involve using tobacco on campus.

23. What if I see someone using tobacco on campus?

Being Tobacco Free promotes a healthier environment in which to live, work and study. Enforcement will depend upon the thoughtfulness, consideration and cooperation of all faculty, staff, students, vendors, volunteers and visitors to comply with the policy and to encourage others to do the same. Anyone who observes a possible violation may courteously and compassionately inform the individual of the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy.

24. How do I handle a situation where I suspect someone is using tobacco (i.e., smokeless tobacco) but I'm not certain?

Address your concern with the individual; appropriately educate them about the policy and connect them with resources.



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25. What do I do if my request for someone to stop using tobacco is not effective?

Our individual responsibility is to educate people about the initiative. Not everyone will feel comfortable approaching someone who is using tobacco. If you choose to approach someone and are met with resistance, you need not press the issue. Specific concerns with regard to noncompliance can be directed to the appropriate contact as indicated in the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy.

26. As a supervisor, what is my responsibility if I receive reports or observe an employee violating the policy?

You are empowered to hold employees accountable to university policy expectations. First, explain the expectations outlined in the policy and provide appropriate resources. If there are continued violations, identify the impact of the employee's actions and manage it appropriately. You are encouraged to contact your college/unit HR representative for help with how to address matters of non-compliance. College/unit HR representatives who need further help should contact their assigned employee and labor relations consultant.

Miscellaneous

27. How will people know that tobacco use is prohibited?

Notices bearing the message "Tobacco Free" will be posted at major university vehicular, pedestrian and building entrances. Whether or not a notice or sign is posted, all university property is Tobacco Free.

28. What are the boundaries of the university for the purposes of defining university property?

The boundaries include any property owned, operated or leased by Ohio State. This includes and is not limited to all buildings and structures; sidewalks; parking lots; walkways; attached parking structures; and university owned, operated or leased vehicles. This policy also applies to most public through streets that are within campus boundaries. The [boundary map](#) is an approximate representation of the Columbus campus boundaries. The boundary map is intended for informational purposes only. University community members are encouraged to respect neighbors of the university. For regional campus maps please see the website for the respective campus. For other locations contact the appropriate university leader.

29. Are targeted efforts being made to communicate the policy to special populations who are statistically at increased risk for tobacco use?

Diversity is a core value of Ohio State. Targeted communications and engagement are planned to convey expectations and identify resources to special populations.

30. Are there exceptions to the policy?

Exceptions are identified in the policy exceptions document hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/720exceptions.pdf.

31. Have other universities implemented tobacco free or smoke free policies?

As of July 8, 2013, the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation notes that there are at least 1,182 smoke free campuses and of these, 798 are tobacco free. Arkansas (33 campuses), Iowa (66 campuses), Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (1 campus, public) and Oklahoma (29 campuses) have adopted laws regarding all college and university grounds to be 100% smoke free with no exemptions. *U. S. Colleges and Universities with Smokefree and Tobacco-Free Policies* is available at no-smoke.org/pdf/smokefreecollegesuniversities.pdf. These include the University of Kentucky, City University of New York (24 campuses), Florida State University, University of California (9 campuses) and Indiana University.

32. Where can I find additional information about the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy and its implementation?

Information on the history and background of the Tobacco Free Ohio State policy is available at hr.osu.edu/tobaccofree.

The Tobacco Free Ohio State policy is available at hr.osu.edu/policy/policy720.pdf and its accompanying resources, are available at hr.osu.edu/policy/resources/720resources.pdf.