



Tobacco Free Ohio State Leader/Supervisor Toolkit

Overview

The Ohio State University strives to enhance the general health and well-being of faculty, staff, students, and visitors. We want to support individuals in becoming tobacco free, so that they can achieve their highest state of health, and we want students to have a high level of health and well-being when they graduate and begin their careers. To support this commitment, we implemented the [Tobacco Free Ohio State, 7.20](#), (tobacco free) policy to create a tobacco free environment by prohibiting the use of tobacco in or on all university owned, operated or leased property, including vehicles.

One frequently asked question is how the policy will be enforced. The university strives to create a culture that encourages compliance by promoting and supporting a healthy environment. Managers, when notified of policy violations, should strive to be non-confrontational and respectful of all members of our campus community, including tobacco users. Use this toolkit for guidance on how you can support this change and navigating potential challenges with policy compliance.

Your Role

As a leader within your unit, you are a strategic partner in implementing this policy. Consistency in communicating the policy and addressing violations is imperative to its success. Your role is to support the [tobacco free policy](#) and to be the **BEST** leader:

1. **Be Informed:** Educate yourself on the policy, FAQs, and resources.
2. **Educate:** Communicate the policy courteously and non-confrontationally to faculty, staff, students, and visitors in your college/unit.
3. **Support:** Connect your employees with appropriate resources, which include stress management, tobacco cessation, nutrition, and fitness.
4. **Take Action:** Hold employees accountable and address matters of repeated violations consistently in the same manner as you would violations of other policies. It is important to assess the impact of the repeated violation in relation to the university's values and expectations. Tobacco-use violations are not a performance management vehicle to accelerate corrective action. Consult with your unit HR representative and your employee and labor relations consultant within the Office of Human Resources on specific situations.

How to Educate Your Faculty, Staff and Student Employees

Below is an example of an effective messaging strategy which can be used to consistently educate your faculty and staff on the policy:

Ohio State has a tobacco free policy that supports a healthy environment for all members of the Buckeye Nation. It prohibits the use of all types of tobacco products in all university buildings and on all university-owned properties, including parking lots, garages and all outside areas.

*Our tobacco free policy is intended to encourage employees, students, and visitors to improve their health by eliminating the use of tobacco products. It is **not** intended to drive tobacco use from on campus to our off-campus neighbors. The consideration and cooperation of tobacco users and non-tobacco users alike is essential for the policy to remain successful. The university is highly committed to supporting all faculty, staff and students who wish to stop using tobacco.*

It is important to incorporate this communication into meetings, emails, publications, and other communication vehicles directed toward your faculty and staff. Consider methods, including one-on-one meetings with tobacco users to proactively increase awareness about the policy, and to assist individuals with finding cessation resources.

Lastly, advise all faculty and staff of the importance of respecting our surrounding neighborhoods. The university is committed to being a good neighbor in our campus communities, and that includes being mindful of litter, loitering and second-hand smoke that could result from off-campus tobacco use.



Talking Tips for Supervisors

1. Meet in a private place to discuss the problem.
2. Let the employee tell their side of story.
3. Be respectful and cognizant that policy compliance may be difficult for tobacco users.
4. Be direct. Make a clear statement that this policy is important to the university and the expectation that everyone complies with this policy.

“As a tobacco user, this may be difficult for you. Nevertheless, it is important for you to understand that policy violations are unacceptable and I need your cooperation.”

5. Help the employee develop an acceptable plan that takes all university policies into account. If the employee wants to quit, make sure to tell the employee about all available resources. If the employee does not want to quit, reinforce policy expectations.
6. Summarize the meeting and expectations moving forward.
7. To avoid future issues of noncompliance, schedule a follow-up meeting to determine if the agreed upon plan is working. If there are continued violations, identify the impact of the employee’s actions and manage it appropriately. You are encouraged to contact your unit HR representative for assistance.

Responding to repeated policy violations

1. **Give the individual the opportunity to tell their side of the story.** *“It’s been brought to my attention that you continue to use tobacco products on university property, and I’d like to give you an opportunity to share your perspective on the information that was reported.”*
2. **Double-check that you understand (summarize what the employee said).** *“So, what you’ve just said to me is [restate what you heard].”*
3. **Gain commitment; ask the individual to come up with action steps that will resolve the problem.** *“Now that we’ve discussed the importance of complying with the tobacco free policy, here are some resources I encourage you to consider utilizing in your efforts to remain compliant under the university’s policy.” Provide the employee the [cessation and stress management resources](#) *handout.**
4. **If no resolution is achieved, consider corrective action.** . As a manager, you may pursue corrective action when previous problem-solving strategies have not been effective. To do so, consult with your unit HR representative.

Responding to employees’ concerns about repeated policy violations of their colleagues

1. Give the employee time to tell their side of the story.
2. Reassure the employee that you have heard their concerns and will appropriately address them.
3. Reeducate the employee who has voiced the concerns, if applicable, on the policy compliance expectations.
4. Document and take appropriate action as it relates to **BEST** (see page 1 ‘Your Role’).



Where to go for help

- For general policy questions, contact HR Connection at 614-247-myHR (6947)
- For questions about the policy or violations of the policy, contact your [Employee and Labor Relations consultant](#).
- University Police will not respond to calls of policy violation; however, if you approach someone to remind them of the policy and the situation escalates to the point where you feel threatened or endangered, please call 911.

Resources

[Tobacco Free](#) policy (includes resources and frequently asked questions)

[Tobacco Cessation Resources](#)

[The Ohio State Employee Assistance Program](#) includes [stress management and other well-being resources](#)

Approaching someone who is using tobacco

The following scenarios and scripts are designed to help members of the university community remind people of the [Tobacco Free](#) policy.

The university expects all members to be respectful and courteous when approaching someone using tobacco products on campus. If the tobacco user becomes agitated or hostile, please do not escalate the situation. Simply walk away. If the situation escalates to the point where you feel threatened or endangered, please contact call 911.

Situation: You see a person using tobacco products on campus.

Response: *“Hello, my name is _____ and I am an (employee, student) here at Ohio State. I want to let you know that we are a tobacco free campus, meaning that use of tobacco products is prohibited on our grounds. Thanks for your cooperation.”*

Question: “Where am I allowed to smoke?”

Response: *“Ohio State is a tobacco free campus and prohibits tobacco use of any kind. The use of tobacco products is not allowed anywhere on the campus. If you choose to smoke or use tobacco products, you will need to leave the campus. Thank you for respecting our policy.”*

Situation: Making arrangements with a vendor or contractor.

Communication: *“I’d like to let you know that Ohio State is a tobacco free environment. We respectfully ask that your organization’s representatives refrain from using tobacco products on our property, grounds, or parking areas. We have employees, students and patients who are trying to quit using tobacco and we want to create an environment that will help them in their cessation efforts.”*

Situation: Giving notice to prospective students and their families.

Communication: Prior to their campus visit(s), proactively communicate the [tobacco free](#) policy to prospective employees, and to prospective students and their families: *“I’d like to let you know in advance of your visit that Ohio State is a tobacco free environment. The use of tobacco products is not allowed on our property, grounds, or parking areas. Thank you for respecting our policy.”*