**Georgia Working on Health**

**Tobacco Free Policies**

Congratulations on your decision to support a tobacco-free environment in your workplace. By making simple changes to the work environment and organizational policy regarding tobacco use, businesses can improve the health of employees while saving the company money. Your next step is to develop a written policy on tobacco use.

**Why do you need a written tobacco-free policy?**

A worksite health policy is a set of statements around the specific health-related practices promoted within your organization. Policies set direction, shape programming and establish expectations for your organizational leadership and staff members. Creating a policy is your organization’s commitment to operating in a certain way. Traditionally, a policy is developed first then used as the basis for establishing practices.

Policies are most effective when written; having a written policy will eliminate any confusion regarding the specifics of the policy. Adopting a policy may be as simple as writing it and putting it in your organization’s handbook or it may require a bit more time.

**Sample Tobacco-Free Policy Statements**

Adapted from the American Lung Association:

A tobacco-free environment helps create a safe and healthy workplace. Smoking and secondhand smoke are known to cause serious lung diseases, respiratory diseases, heart disease and cancer. (Worksite Name) recognizes the hazards caused by tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. Our policy to provide a tobacco-free environment for all employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors was established to keep a safe and healthy workplace environment. This policy covers the use of any form of tobacco products such as smokeless tobacco, cigar rolls and electronic nicotine delivery systems such as e-cigarettes, and it applies to both employees and non-employee visitors of (Worksite Name).

From <http://action.lung.org/site/DocServer/tobacco-free-workplace.pdf>

Adapted from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota:

(Worksite Name) is committed to creating a worksite environment where employees have the opportunity to make their health and well-being a priority in their professional and personal life.

The hazards of tobacco use are well known. Tobacco use is a major cause of preventable disease and death in both the user and non-user. Tobacco-free workplaces help support employees who want to quit using tobacco or have already quit, and promote a healthy work environment for all employees.

**Sample Tobacco-Free Policy Components**

The first step in creating a worksite health policy is ensuring that the policy meets the needs of your worksite, the employees, and the worksite environment. Your tobacco policy can include the components below:

* (Insert worksite name) is now completely tobacco-free.
  + The use of any form of tobacco products including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigar rolls or electronic nicotine delivery systems such as e-cigarettes is not permitted within the facilities, parking lots, company-owned/rented vehicles or on the property of (insert worksite name) by anyone at any time (24hrs/7days).
* (Insert worksite name) will provide free education and cessation services to all employees interested in quitting smoking.

**Policies for a Tobacco-Free Environment**

* Institute a comprehensive tobacco-free (not just smoke-free) policy. The policy should apply to the entire worksite campus, including indoor and outdoor areas, leased or shared facilities, and vehicles.
* Policies should also prohibit the use of any form of tobacco products near the entrances to buildings, with the legal clearance footage specified. Keep in mind that the most effective “gold standard” policies do not allow for designated smoking areas or separately ventilated smoking facilities.
* Post signage indoors and outdoors to alert employees and visitors to the worksite policy.
* Communicate and enforce the policy with an integrated, non-punitive message. For example: “We care about your health. The company offers the following programs and supports to help you stop using tobacco.”

For more information on tobacco policy development and implementation, including establishing supportive programming for employees, please refer to the *Work Healthy Georgia* toolkit at <https://dph.georgia.gov/working-on-health>.