

Get ready for 1st July 2007

A good place to start

To be ready for the 1st July you will need to consider how you will implement the smoke free law in your premises. Where will smokers go to smoke now that they cannot smoke indoors? A written smoking policy makes it clear to employees, managers, clients and visitors (as well as enforcement officers) where people can - and can't - smoke. Regardless of the size of your organisation, or the number of employees or volunteers you have, it is in the interest of your workplace to be ready for the 1st July to avoid fines being issued. The sample smoking policy in this pack can be easily adapted for your workplace.

Why wait until 1st July?

It could take time to develop a smoking policy, particularly for larger organisations. You may wish to give customers advance notice of a new policy, order signs or deal with any teething trouble before becoming liable for penalties. Start to think about what you will need to do to comply with the legislation now.

Something else to think about

Each year, Nottinghamshire's economy loses £80 million through employees taking cigarette breaks. Consider the following sum and multiply it by the number of smokers in your organisation:

1 smoker @ 3 x 10-minute cigarette breaks each day = almost 3 hours extra paid breaks per week - breaks that non-smoking employees don't have.

Leading organisations in Nottinghamshire have smoking policies that don't allow cigarette breaks during working hours, to save money, improve productivity and ensure equitability regarding breaks for all employees. They report high levels of compliance and support for this rule amongst employees.

Some organisations also have smoke free sites as well as premises. They are not happy about smokers congregating around entrances and exits to their buildings, and the image this presents to customers and clients.

Although the smoke free legislation won't require your organisation to remove smoking breaks and make external areas smoke free, if you want to build these into your policy the sample smoking policy in this pack can be adapted for your organisation.

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Litter

As smokers move outside your buildings to smoke you are likely to notice an increase in cigarette butts in outdoor areas. This can be unsightly and unwelcoming for customers or clients entering your buildings. Consider whether you need to put cigarette bins outside your premises to prevent litter. You may need special cigarette butt bins which are fire safe. And don't forget - litter is an offence. If your customers or clients are seen dropping a cigarette butt they are liable to a fixed penalty notice of up to £80. And under new proposed Government powers, owners or occupiers of premises may become liable to a fixed penalty notice of up to £110 if there are cigarette butts in the immediate area of their premises.

Do you want to sponsor the provision of bins on the pavement outside your premises? Your local Council may be able to arrange this and then carry out the collection of the bins - contact them to find out.

Noise and nuisance

If you are providing outdoor areas for smokers, think carefully about where these are located so that neighbouring buildings are not affected by noise or smoke drifting onto their property. If your premises are open late at night noise is more likely to be a problem, particularly if neighbouring premises are residential. Locate any outdoor smoking areas away from neighbouring buildings or adjacent property. Contact your local Council's Environmental Health department for advice.

Want further help to go smoke free?

- Call the Smoke Free England information line on 0800 169 1697 and register for an information pack and free 'no smoking' signs
- Visit www.smokefreeengland.co.uk for up-to-date information and resources
- Your local Council's website will have information on how to go smoke free, including a sample smoking policy that you can adapt for your workplace
- Your local NHS Primary Care Trust's website will have information about their free Stop Smoking Service
- The National Clean Air Award is awarded to any business with a smoke free policy. If you would like to receive an award, as well as information on how to go smoke free, visit the website at www.cleanairaward.org.uk