

TOBACCO-FREE PARKS

POLICY TOOLKIT



T.E.A.M. TOBACCO
EDUCATION &
ADVOCACY OF THE
MIDLANDS
TEAMTOBACCOFREE.ORG

HIT A HOME RUN

PARKS PROMOTE HEALTHY ACTIVITIES & COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Adopt a
tobacco-free
policy.



Parks are community assets, they provide a place to gather, exercise, enjoy nature and play. Parks foster healthy lifestyles and provide a habitat for nature while creating green spaces for communities to enjoy.

With all the benefits a park brings to a community, it should be accessible and safe for all who visit. When tobacco use is permitted in the park, it brings concerns about exposure to secondhand smoke, cigarette butt litter, and environmental pollution.

This toolkit provides resources and sample materials to help those interested in adopting a tobacco-free park policy.

TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

A policy where no form of tobacco use is allowed in the area. This includes cigarettes, pipes, cigars, smokeless tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

The goal is to promote the health and well-being of the community and visitors in the area as well as to assist in the reduction of tobacco use initiation by youth.

NO AMOUNT OF SECONDHAND SMOKE IS SAFE

When you are around a person who is smoking, you inhale the same dangerous chemicals as he or she does. Even being around secondhand smoke for a short time can hurt your health.

TOBACCO-FREE PARKS MEAN LESS LITTER

Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in the United States. Americans discard more than 175 million pounds of cigarette butts every year.

SMOKE-FREE PARKS PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING

Creating tobacco-free parks is a way for communities to make outdoor spaces even more conducive to healthy living and encourages tobacco users to smoke less or even quit.



Tobacco-free policies for parks & outdoor recreation facilities make sense.



Why make your parks & playgrounds tobacco-free?



Parks are established to promote healthy activities. The purpose of park areas is to promote community wellness and tobacco-free policies fit with this idea.

Secondhand smoke harms everyone. Secondhand smoke is cancer-causing and there is no safe level of exposure. Exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate health consequences such as asthma attacks and other respiratory diseases.

Cigarette litter is dangerous. Discarded cigarettes pollute the land and water and may be ingested by children, pets, birds or fish.

Tobacco-free policies help change community norms. Tobacco-free policies establish the community norm that tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults within the entire community.

Policies provide consistency among community athletic facilities and groups.

Tobacco-free environments promote positive community role modeling. Adults are role models, when youth see tobacco use they view it as an accepted norm and are more likely to start using tobacco products.

Protect the health, safety and welfare of community members.

Tobacco-free policies help break the connection between tobacco and sports. For years the tobacco industry has sponsored sporting events and advertised at recreational events, misleading young people's perception of tobacco use.



® **aggsmiytteg**
07sio9

Some cities have adopted tobacco-free policies for all of their parks.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PARKS TOBACCO-FREE

1

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY

Create an actionable policy that covers the entire park system that makes clear to patrons there is no tobacco use on park grounds. Assess who has the authority to designate park grounds as tobacco-free.

2

TAKE ACTION TO IMPLEMENT YOUR POLICY

Start by building community and park patron support, such as having community members send in letters of support. Involve key partners in discussions, especially those who regularly use park facilities.

Next, make recommendations to decision makers and have decision makers vote to approve the policy.

Once the vote is approved, set a policy implementation date where staff and key partners will enforce the policy and continue to educate park patrons.

3

EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY

Utilize signage, city communication channels, websites, park newsletters, newspaper articles and other forms of media to get the word out.

T.E.A.M. (Tobacco Education & Advocacy of the Midlands) CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

FREE ASSISTANCE

Contact T.E.A.M. to get started. Email at: info@TEAMTobaccofree.com
Or call at: (402) 593-3022
T.E.A.M. can assist you in adopting a tobacco-free policy.

SIGNAGE

T.E.A.M. can provide tobacco-free park signage.

RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE

T.E.A.M. can provide materials such as sample laws, ordinances, policies or resolutions. The coalition can also offer assistance in the development of a communications plan to notify the community and municipal employees of the tobacco-free policy.

PRINTED EDUCATION MATERIAL

Educational materials can be made available along with a draft press release for local media and smoking cessation information for the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline.

COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

1 Reasons for the policy.

2 Who the policy applies to.

3 Locations, areas and facilities the policy applies to.

4 Clear policy language

5 Consistent policy enforcement.

6 Consequences identified.

7 Well communicated.

8 Supported policy activities.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Support for smoke-free outdoor parks:

86% of Nebraskans support restrictions on smoking allowed in outdoor parks.

50% of tobacco users support restrictions in at least some areas of parkland.

Support for smoke-free outdoor sporting events:

95% of Nebraskans support some type of smoking restriction at sporting events.

Since 2015, over 1,000 signatures have been gathered in Sarpy and Cass Counties in support of tobacco-free parks.



CIGARETTE BUTT LITTER

Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter on the planet!

An estimated **1.69 BILLION** pounds of butts are littered annually worldwide.

Butts are a threat to wildlife and small children, often mistaken for food.

Used butts are full of toxic chemicals that pollute our waterways.

Key research findings indicate

that the most effective ways to

address cigarette butt littering include

decreasing the amount of existing litter through clean-up activities and educating the public with motivational messages that target individual responsibility and obligation.

PARK PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

Your feedback and opinions concerning tobacco use in our parks will help us better advocate for park facilities personnel to adopt tobacco-free policies in our parks. While smoke-free policies generally focus on the effects of secondhand smoke, tobacco-free policies incorporate any type of tobacco delivery system.

What city do you reside in? _____

Do you support a smoke-free policy in your community parks? YES NO

Do you support a tobacco-free policy in your community parks? YES NO

Do you think tobacco litter is a problem in your community parks? YES NO

How often do you visit your community parks?

- DAILY WEEKLY MONTHLY
 SEMI-MONTHLY SEMI-ANNUALLY ANNUALLY
 RARELY/NEVER

Which best describes your age?

- 18 OR YOUNGER 20-29 30-39
 40-49 50-59 60 OR OLDER

Which best describes you?

- YOUTH PARENT GRANDPARENT PARK PATRON
 NON-TOBACCO USER TOBACCO USER FORMER TOBACCO USER

Would you like to be added to the T.E.A.M. email list for quarterly updates?

- YES NO If yes, please provide your email address:

Please add any additional comments/concerns: _____

To support the implementation of a Tobacco-Free Park Policy
sample of sign below



Contact T.E.A.M. for additional information.
info@TEAMTobaccoFree.org
(402) 593-3022



MISSION:

To educate and advocate for healthy, tobacco-free communities.

VISION:

To reduce the negative impact of tobacco in our communities.

T.E.A.M. TOBACCO EDUCATION & ADVOCACY OF THE MIDLANDS

TEAMTOBACCOFREE.ORG

CHI Health Midlands

11111 S 84th St.

Papillion, NE 68046

(402) 593-3022

info@TEAMTobaccoFree.org