

Reminding Visitors of Your Tobacco-Free Policy

Many colleges and universities have taken an important step in preventing tobacco use among young people by implementing tobacco-free grounds policies. For many colleges, enforcement has not been a problem. For others, tobacco use on college campuses or at college sponsored events continues to be a challenge.

Reasons for enforcement Issues:

Lack of Awareness. Visitors may not know about the tobacco-free policy for a number of reasons (policy is new, signs aren't posted, announcements aren't made at events) and may be violating the policy unknowingly.

Difficulties suppressing the urge to use tobacco. Heavy tobacco users might find it difficult to refrain from using for an extended period of time. However, they can comply with the policy by leaving the campus grounds. After all, that's more than what is possible on most airline flights.

Reluctance to confront violators. Many university personnel are hesitant to confront violators for a variety of reasons. Some "don't think it is their job" to police enforcement.

Solutions:

Communicate the policy effectively. Publicize the policy in the local newspaper, university newsletters, on sports programs.

Post signs liberally around campus including near entrances to stadiums, in gyms, on doors.

Make announcements before and during events using messages like, "For the health and well-being of our students and visitors, tobacco use is prohibited on all university property."

Tactfully confront violators.

Use gentle verbal reminders and point to tobacco-free signage if possible.

Hand violators a card with the university policy information. The person approaching the violator doesn't have to say anything.

Encourage students, staff, and other community members to help remind visitors of the policy.

Presence of law enforcement

The visibility of law enforcement on university property may be a useful deterrent. Many campuses have officers at events already. They can also monitor for drug and alcohol use, violence, and vandalism as well as tobacco use.

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