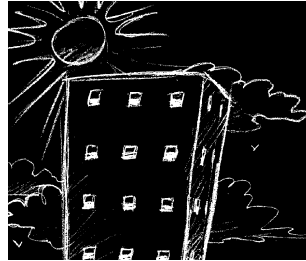


C h a p t e r **3**



A
DECISION
MAKER'S
GUIDE TO
CHOOSING A
WORKPLACE
POLICY

The Surgeon General has reported that the simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same airspace may reduce, but does not eliminate, the exposure of nonsmokers to ETS.¹



While many possible smoking policies exist, only two are viable in today's social and scientific environment:

(1) Smokefree

Smokefree environment in company facilities and vehicles; can be extended to include the property or grounds of the employer.

(2) Separately ventilated areas

Smoking limited to separately ventilated smoking rooms.

Table 3-1 compares the two types of smoking policies. When deciding which to select, consider any relevant laws and ordinances as well as the consequences of the policies. For example, health care costs are not likely to be affected by policies that allow employees to smoke in separately ventilated areas. A 1995 study found that separately ventilated smoking rooms might increase the lung

cancer mortality of smokers whereas a smokefree policy could decrease lung cancer mortality among smokers.²

Cost savings may not result unless the company implements a comprehensive ETS policy and provides cessation activities that result in a reduction in smoking among employees and covered dependents. You need to decide what benefits are most important for your company, keeping in mind that protecting the health of both smokers and nonsmokers requires a smokefree workplace.

According to one study, in workplaces where smoking is allowed, 59% of nonsmokers reported that exposure to ETS caused them discomfort.³ A recent study demonstrated the clear relationship between the level of a smokefree policy and the actual exposure of nonsmokers to hazardous components of ETS: the more comprehensive the policy, the lower the exposure.⁴

It's Your Decision

Some questions to consider in making your decision include the following:

- Given the employees' interests, health, and work environment, what policy will provide them the most protection?

TABLE 3-1. SMOKING POLICIES: 100% SMOKEFREE AND SEPARATELY VENTILATED AREAS

Policy	Pros	Cons
<p>Smokefree <i>Smoking is not allowed inside any building or company vehicle. Smoking occurs only at designated outdoor smoking locations. Policy can be extended to prohibit smoking on company grounds. Then, employees who smoke will need to refrain from smoking throughout the workday or leave company grounds to smoke.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with all laws and ordinances • Greatly reduces ETS exposure for all employees • Provides best health and safety benefits for employees • May reduce the number of cigarettes smoked by employees; may encourage employees to quit smoking • Decreases maintenance costs • Sends a clear message to employees • Easier to administer and enforce • Low cost to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires smokers to modify their behavior • Some costs may be incurred if outside smoking shelters are constructed • Employee smoking directly outside building impacts image • Inconvenience to employees who smoke • If not properly managed, smokers may be disproportionately absent from their work stations
<p>Separately Ventilated Areas <i>Smoking is allowed only in dedicated smoking rooms. The rooms have separate ventilation systems designed to prevent ETS from leaking into other areas of the building.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with most laws and ordinances • Reduces nonsmokers' exposure to ETS • Allows smokers to stay indoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have adverse effects on smokers' health • Building and maintaining separately ventilated lounges is expensive • Requires space • Ventilation systems may not adequately protect nonsmokers from ETS exposure

- What policy will offer the greatest benefits to the company at the lowest cost?
- What policy will management find most supportable?
- What community ordinances exist governing smoking in public places or workplaces?
- What are the customers' or the community's expectations regarding ETS, given the policies in other similar workplaces and public sentiments regarding ETS?

There are a number of ways to gather information to answer these questions and to support your decision about the most appropriate smoking policy.

Chapter Five offers a step-by-step guide to gathering information and determining what policy option to choose.

Model Smokefree Policy and Procedure

The model policy in Table 3-2 is a starting point for companies that do not have a smoking policy. It can be modified to suit your needs. Note that you

TABLE 3-2. MODEL SMOKEFREE POLICY

Policy

Due to the acknowledged hazards arising from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, it shall be the policy of _____ to provide a smokefree environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of smokeless or "spit" tobacco and applies to both employees and nonemployee visitors of _____.

Definition

1. There will be no smoking of tobacco products within the facilities at any time.

The decision to provide or not provide designated smoking areas outside the building will be at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

The designated smoking area will be located at least 20 feet from the main entrance.

All materials used for smoking, including cigarette butts and matches, will be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers. Supervisors will ensure periodic cleanup of the designated smoking area. If the designated smoking area is not properly maintained (for example, if cigarette butts are found on the ground), it can be eliminated at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

[For a policy that extends smokefree to include company property, substitute the following: There will be no smoking of tobacco products within the facilities or on the property of _____ at any time.]

2. There will be no smoking in any _____ vehicle.

There will be no smoking in _____ vehicles at any time.

There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting persons on _____-authorized business.

3. Breaks

Supervisors will discuss the issue of smoking breaks with their staff. Together they will develop effective solutions that do not interfere with the productivity of the staff.

Procedure

1. Employees will be informed of this policy through signs posted in _____ facilities and vehicles, the policy manual, and orientation and training provided by their supervisors.
2. Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs, and it will be explained by their host.
3. The _____ will assist employees who wish to quit smoking by facilitating access to recommended smoking cessation programs and materials.
4. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.

can address issues regarding smokeless or “spit” tobacco in the same policy. Although ETS is not an issue with smokeless tobacco, aesthetic and health issues do pertain to smokeless tobacco, and it may make sense to include all tobacco products in a single policy.

Deciding which policy to implement is only half of the decision; the other half is deciding what type of support to offer the smokers who will be affected by the change. The next chapter will provide you with useful information to choose support for the employees who smoke.

References

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