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## TOBACCO-FREE SPORT AND RECREATION COACHES IMPLEMENTATION PRIMER

This primer will support coaches to promote Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation (TFSR). TFSR means everyone taking part in a sport or recreational activity does not use tobacco industry products. As a coach you have a powerful role to play. You can:

- Be tobacco-free
- Share your reasons for being free from tobacco industry products
- Create a tobacco-free environment at your sporting events
- Encourage your team to become, and remain, tobacco-free.

Visit [playlivebetobaccofree.ca](http://playlivebetobaccofree.ca) for more information and help your team become tobacco-free.

### Why Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation?

Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation policies **protect young people**. These policies:

- Prevent youth from starting to use tobacco industry products
- Gives everyone a chance to perform at their best
- Protect children from second-hand smoke
- Creates a culture free of tobacco industry products
- Protect the environment
- Help smokers quit



### Your Role as a Coach

- Coaches, sport volunteers, officials, and other players are important role models for young people. Athletes and coaches provide powerful role models for smoke-free sports and lifestyles. Tobacco-free elite athletes can play valuable roles in health promotion.
- Ensuring that athletes and coaches model appropriate non-smoking and health promoting behaviours to adolescents and young adults is important to capitalize on the benefits of involvement in sports.
- Active participation in sports makes it less likely for adolescents to start smoking. Motivating adolescents to participate in sports is an important tool for promoting tobacco-free living.

Creating a sporting environment that is free from the use of tobacco products is an important role for coaches and is consistent with key sport initiatives like Canadian Sport for Life ([canadiansportforlife.ca](http://canadiansportforlife.ca)) and TrueSport ([truesportpur.ca](http://truesportpur.ca))

### Tobacco Use Remains an Issue for Young People

Despite years of decreasing rates of use, tobacco use among youth 15-19 appear to be levelling off. Importantly, the younger you are when you start smoking, the more likely you are to become a regular smoker, become a heavy smoker and to die of smoking-related diseases.

Once youth start to smoke, it's tough to quit. Most teen smokers report that they would like to quit smoking that they have attempted to do so many times, but few adolescents successfully quit.

## The Big Picture: Tobacco Affects Athletic Performance

Tobacco industry products are harmful to health and counter to the positive messaging and benefits of sporting and physical fitness. The use of all forms of tobacco products has immediate, negative effects on athletic performance, as well as long-term health and well being.

### All Forms of Tobacco Use Impairs Ability to Play

Tobacco use almost instantly decreases lung function, and increases heart rate. These consequences reduce the amount of oxygen absorbed into the blood, resulting in reduced endurance and earlier fatigue in smokers during exercise. As a result, athletes who smoke or chew simply cannot perform their best.

**In sports, this can be the difference between keeping up with the competition, and falling way, way behind.**

### Effects of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke

Recent research suggests that exposure to outdoor tobacco smoke (OTS) is hazardous to the health of adults and children and may be life threatening to those with asthma or other chronic illnesses. The level of OTS exposure is dependent on an individual's proximity to the source of the OTS (the smoker), wind conditions and the number of smokers present.

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Exposure to second-hand smoke can cause damage to the lungs, heart and other organs. There is evidence that after just 30 minutes of exposure to second-hand smoke, the circulation of blood to the heart is compromised.

### Support for Tobacco Free Sport

Tobacco-free sport and recreation is consistent with key sporting philosophies in Canada, such as those of Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) and TrueSport. TFSR supports and encourages sport's contribution in Canadian society and emphasizes being free of tobacco industry product use as a critical component of promoting each child's healthy and logical development in a sport or physical activity.

In Ontario, many sporting and recreation associations and clubs have passed TFSR policies.

#### Sport and Recreation Organizations with TFSR Policies

- Hockey
- Soccer
- Baseball, softball
- Football
- Speed Skating
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Martial arts
- After school programs
- Boys and Girls clubs
- Gymnastics clubs
- And others



Recent evidence shows that community support for tobacco free sport and recreation is very strong. In Brant, Durham, Halton, Kingston and Simcoe Muskoka more than 75% of adults support by-laws to make public sports fields and spectator areas smoke-free. A public opinion poll conducted in Ottawa showed that 71% of Ottawa residents strongly/somewhat support smoke-free playgrounds and 55% strongly/somewhat support smoke-free beaches.

## Your Game Plan for Tobacco-Free Sport and Recreation:

1. **Make a personal commitment to making your team tobacco-free.** Explain your perspective and commitment to your players and their parents. Make a pledge as a team, and individually, to be tobacco-free – and make sure to model this behaviour. Sample pledge forms can be downloaded from [playlivebetobaccofree.ca](http://playlivebetobaccofree.ca).
2. **Speak in terms that children and youth understand** – focus on immediate effects of tobacco use (like poorer athletic performance) rather than long term dangers.
3. **Develop a TFSR policy - ensure that everyone involved with your team makes a commitment to be tobacco-free** while engaged in activities with your team. Include the TFSR policy with other rules and policies for the team and make sure the change is highlighted along with other new policies.
4. **Create visual reminders for your team that will demonstrate their commitment** – download the “Play, Live, Be...Tobacco-Free” logo and place it on all team materials and equipment.
5. **Have a plan for handling people who choose not to follow the team’s policies.** For players, this may mean reminding them of their commitment (including their signed pledges) and discussing how their use of tobacco is impacting their playing experience. For parents, officials and volunteers, a letter outlining the policy and reminding them of the commitment made by the team, and why, will be useful. Repeated disregard for the policy should be treated in the same manner as disregard for other team policies.
6. **Spread your good work.** Talk to other coaches and colleagues involved in your sporting organization. Gain their support for making your organization tobacco-free.

## SAMPLE TOBACCO-FREE ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY

### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The *[name of organization]* is committed to providing a healthy environment for participants, volunteers and spectators involved with our organization. We recognize that there is significant evidence demonstrating the negative health impacts of tobacco use and exposure (including second-hand smoke from the use of tobacco indoors and exposure to drifting smoke outdoors) and that no level of tobacco exposure is safe. We also recognize that children and youth gain positive images of tobacco use when they see role-models, leaders and individuals that they respect using tobacco.

### COMMITMENT

We believe that *[name of sport]* is a *[healthy activity/sport]* that promotes physical activity and healthy living. Players, coaches and volunteers involved in our *[organization/sport]* have a responsibility to model positive health behaviour with regard to tobacco use.

### POLICY

Activities including but not limited to games, tournaments, competitions, practices, training sessions, events (e.g., fundraising) and other performances sanctioned by our organization will be tobacco-free.

*Definition:* Tobacco-free means that the use of tobacco by players/ participants, coaches/leaders, parents/caregivers, spectators and officials is prohibited during all activities sanctioned or engaged in by our organization. Tobacco products include: cigarettes, cigars, pipes, cigarillos, tobacco chew, plug, or snuff, snus, hookah, bidis and kreteks.

## SCOPE AND LOCATION

The *[name of organization]* tobacco-free policy will apply to all activities including, but not limited to games, tournaments, competitions, practices, training sessions, events (e.g., fundraising) and other performances sanctioned by our organization. Locations for each of these activities will vary, however our policy will apply to all locations while the *[name of organization]* sanctioned activity is ongoing.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

To promote the policy we will:

- Provide a copy of the policy and explain it to coaching staff. Coaching staff will explain the policy to parents/caregivers.
- Include the policy in all orientation and information packages provided to coaches, officials, players, members, volunteers and teams/organizations / groups who attend or participate in our activities and/ or use our facilities.
- Make the policy visible throughout the year using various channels/opportunities including information on our website, banners/signage at events and encouraging coaches and all players to promote a tobacco-free lifestyle.

## POLICY ENFORCEMENT

We will enforce the tobacco-free policy to ensure that all those attending and participating in the *[name of organization]*'s activities has access to a tobacco-free environment. We will use the following steps to enforce our policy:

1. Post signs about our policy where our activities take place, using signs, banners and include in information materials available at the activity.
2. Encourage our coaches, players/members, officials and volunteers to respectfully remind individuals using tobacco at *[name of organization]* activities about the tobacco-free policy.
3. Provide one verbal warning to individuals who repeatedly do not follow the policy. Verbal warning will be delivered by an official representative of the *[name of organization]* including *[list official representatives by title]*. The *[name of organization]* representative will inform the *[name of organization]* executive about the verbal warning including the date, location and name of the individual who was warned.
4. The Executive will provide a formal written warning to the individual. Following a written warning, the individual violating the policy again may be brought to the *[name of organization]* for disciplinary actions which could include being banned from all *[name of organization]* events.

## POLICY APPROVAL

This policy will be reviewed by the *[name of organization]* Executive Committee annually. Policy Approved: *[DATE]* Policy Revised: *[revision date, if applicable]*

**More Resources** For fact sheets, resources and supports for your Tobacco Free Sport and Recreation efforts, go to [playlivebetobaccofree.ca](http://playlivebetobaccofree.ca) or contact your local public health unit by visiting [alphaweb.org/ont\\_health\\_units.asp](http://alphaweb.org/ont_health_units.asp)