

PLAY, LIVE, BE TOBACCO-FREE GUIDE PRIMER



TOBACCO-FREE SPORT AND RECREATION

This primer is a brief overview of the Play, Live, Be Tobacco-free Guide. It is intended to provide brief information for people who are interested in learning more about efforts to make areas where outdoor sports and recreation activities take place tobacco-free, and to help them identify what they need to learn more about. The full Guide and other resources are available at www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca. Another important resource is the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport's website www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-communities/hcf/default.asp.

WHAT IS TOBACCO-FREE SPORT AND RECREATION?

Tobacco-free sport and recreation means that everyone taking part in a sport or recreational activity – participants, volunteers, officials, coaches, leaders and spectators – do not smoke, snuff, dip or chew tobacco while participating in the activity. Organizations can help prevent youth from starting to use tobacco industry products with a policy to make their organizations tobacco-free. Another approach used by some communities are smoke-free by-laws which includes outdoor areas. By-laws are legally binding policies or regulations which are enacted by a municipality acting under the authority of a higher law, in this case, the *Ontario Municipal Act*. The *Ontario Municipal Act* permits municipalities to limit where individuals can smoke, however it does not provide them with the power to address tobacco use in general (Government of Ontario, n.d.). Smoke-free by-laws in outdoor areas are effective because they provide a community-wide standard.

Both tobacco-free policies and smoke-free by-laws provide approaches to addressing tobacco-free sport and recreation in your community. They can work in a complementary way to provide comprehensive coverage for your community regarding outdoor tobacco use. Developing relationships and working together with other members of your community, your local public health unit, parks and recreation staff, sports and recreation organizations and your own community or group will be important to be able to make the change you seek.

WHY IS TOBACCO-FREE SPORT AND RECREATION IMPORTANT?

Sport and recreation organizations play a vital role in the health and wellness of our community. A tobacco-free policy strengthens the positive impact your organization has on the health of the community and provides an important message about being tobacco-free to individuals who are part of your organization.

The benefits of tobacco-free sport and recreation include:

- Preventing youth from starting to use tobacco industry products
- Protecting the environment
- Protecting children from second-hand smoke
- Giving everyone a chance to perform at their best
- Creating a tobacco-free culture
- Helping tobacco users quit

How to develop a Tobacco-free Sport and Recreation Policy and Smoke-free Outdoor Spaces By-law

There are six basic steps for making an effective tobacco-free sport and recreation policy. These six steps can also be used to develop smoke-free outdoor by-laws, but different emphases and approaches are used at each step.

This section highlights key information about each of the six steps. For a more thorough explanation of any of these steps, see the full Guide at www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca

STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Perhaps the most important step in building a community or organizational approach to smoke-free outdoor by-laws or organizational tobacco-free sport and recreation policies is to understand how your community experiences, and sees the issue. Conducting a community assessment or environmental scan will differ

based on whether you are interested in passing an organizational policy, or a community-wide by-law. In some cases, the community assessment will help you decide to change your focus from a tobacco-free sport and recreation policy to a smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law based on what you learn.

TO CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN:

1. Gather together a group of community stakeholders who are knowledgeable about community life, especially with regards to rules and policies for smoke-free (or tobacco-free) sports or recreation environments.
2. Plan a series of questions to answer about the issue, focused on a comprehensive view of the community (political, environmental, social and technological) and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to your issue. You should also review existing reports on the community's health, and how the community uses parks and recreation facilities to help inform your efforts.
3. Keep notes based on your discussions, and use this information to assess the facilitators and barriers.

STEP 2: BUILDING SUPPORT

A tobacco-free policy for your organization is important because it clearly states your position about tobacco in sports and recreation and how your organization will address tobacco use. A smoke-free outdoor by-law will demonstrate your community's commitment to creating a healthy community. Building support will differ based on your community, organization, resources and supports.

Consider these ideas as a guide for building support for your policy or by-law:

- Host a tobacco-free event and ask attendees to sign a pledge to be tobacco-free.
- Conduct a survey of your members or the community to assess their support for tobacco-free sport and recreation or smoke-free outdoor spaces.
- Work with your local public health agency's tobacco control coordinator to increase awareness of the harmfulness of tobacco industry products and the benefits of a tobacco-free sport and recreation policy and smoke-free outdoor spaces. Public health may also have collected information about the support in your community for tobacco-free spaces.
- Include young voices in the efforts to build support. Children can be powerful advocates of tobacco-free sport and recreation and smoke-free outdoor spaces.
- Link up with your sister (or brother) organizations and/or neighbouring communities to develop comprehensive support for organizational tobacco-free sport and recreation policy.
- Provide information to committee members, members of the public and/or municipal councillors about tobacco use and tobacco-free sport and recreation.
- If youth are a key audience, you may need to provide youth-focused resources. Youth may also need more information about smokeless tobacco.
- Ensure key stakeholders (coaches, volunteers, board of directors, municipal staff, councillors) are informed and involved from the beginning.
- Invite a guest speaker to discuss the importance of tobacco-free sport and recreation.
- Contact your local public health agency to request a consultation.
- Get support from leaders and members by sharing tobacco-free policies or smoke-free by-laws from other organizations and communities.

Resources to support these efforts are in this guide and available at www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca



Once you have gained community support, be sure to demonstrate it to stakeholders. Make sure that the organization and community are aware of people's support for the issue. Some ideas for how to share this information are:

- Support community groups to collect signatures for a petition.
- Draft letters to decision-makers such as council members, members of the executive, or community leaders.
- Encourage supporters to write letters to the editor of the local paper.
- Make sure you provide contact information to the community so that you can respond to information requests.
- Attend local council meetings with your partners whenever this issue is being discussed.
- Select people to provide testimonials at a local council meeting.
- Issue media releases and advisories before your tobacco-free sport and recreation events to profile your activity in the media.

STEP 3: CREATING THE POLICY/BY-LAW

Whether you are working towards creating a tobacco-free policy in an organization, or a smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law at the municipal level, you will need to sit down and create the policy that you want.

While organizational policies and by-laws are very different, each contains the same type of information:

- Background information about the reason for your tobacco-free sport and recreation policy or smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law, and a statement that clearly explains your organization's or the municipalities' position.
- Identifies who will be affected by the tobacco-free policy (spectators, members, administrators, officials, coaches, leaders, participants, family, visitors, volunteers).
- Locations where the policy/by-law will, and will not, apply (playing fields, sidelines, concession stands, parking lots, entrances, parks, trails). Remember that smoke can travel.
- The date when the policy/by-law will come into effect.
- How compliance with the policy/by-law will be handled.

This should include clear, specific and enforceable consequences or impacts for not following the policy/by-law.

Writing a by-law is somewhat different from writing a policy. By-laws are legal documents and should be written in consultation with your municipality's staff and the municipal clerk.

STEP 4: PROMOTING THE POLICY/BY-LAW

Once your policy or by-law is passed, promoting awareness of the new policy or by-law is critical to its long-term success. The more people are aware of, and understand the policy, the more likely they are to comply with it. It is usually a good idea to have enough lead-time before the enactment of a new policy or a by-law to implement a strong promotion and awareness campaign, especially if the passage of the policy or by-law was controversial.

Use the following ideas to promote your new tobacco-free policy or smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law:

- Distribute a fact sheet that summarizes your organization's tobacco-free policy or the municipal by-law to key stakeholders.
- Send letters to influential leaders and people in your organization or municipality to explain the new policy or by-law, encourage them to support the policy and act as positive role-models.
- Make announcements about the new policy before, during, and after games and events, in the newspaper and other community media outlets.
- Include information about the new policy/by-law in materials that are relevant to the organization or community users of the space – like municipal recreation guides, on websites, in handbooks and registration packages.
- Host a special event to highlight the change at the kick-off of the season to inform the community.
- Make information available at community locations – libraries, visitor booths, arenas, Early Years Centres, trail associations, community agencies, among others.
- Use community based media like organization flyers and newsletters and school newsletters to inform the community about the change.

STEP 5: REINFORCING THE POLICY/BY-LAW

It is everyone's responsibility to reinforce the policy or by-law and encourage others to follow it. Most people will follow the policy or by-law when they are made aware of it and why it was put in place. It is important to ensure that a clear understanding of the reinforcement strategy is shared by all those affected by the policy and that they understand their shared and individual responsibility for reinforcing it.

In both tobacco-free sport and recreation policy and smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law, visual reminders are very helpful in reinforcing the new rules. Organizations and municipalities who have implemented tobacco-free policies report that it is helpful to have a prominently displayed sign or logo to point to while reinforcing the by-law or policy.

Your reinforcement strategy should include:

- **Signage and Communication:** Permanent signs where possible that are highly visible and ongoing communication about the new policy/by-law on organization materials and websites.
- **Accountability:** Individuals/groups assigned (and trained) to enforce the policy and by-law.
- **Process:** A step-by-step process for an enforcement strategy that is clear and defined.
- **Consequences:** Tangible consequences for non-compliance that are within scope of the organization/municipality.
- **Training:** People tasked with implementing reinforcement strategy are trained and understand their responsibilities.

STEP 6: ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY/BY-LAW

Efforts to evaluate the tobacco-free sport and recreation policy or smoke-free outdoor spaces by-law will be similar – with only the scope (organization-wide or community-wide) as key differences. The evaluation will help you understand what you did right, what you could have done better, identify significant issues with enforcement, and provide insight into how you might handle the development and implementation of a similar process in the future.

An evaluation process can be very simple:

- Include the issue on the agenda of meetings with key groups affected by the policy/by-law at regular intervals (yearly).
- Put a very brief survey on the organization or municipality's website.
- Conduct a survey with users who attend events or activities at the spaces covered by the policy or by-law.

Ask the following questions:

- Are people aware of the policy?
- Are people following the new policy?
- Is cigarette litter a problem?
- Do staff and volunteers feel comfortable and confident enforcing the policy?
- Is the non-compliance strategy working?

Remember – more support is available for working on tobacco-free sport and recreation. Go to www.playlivebetobaccofree.ca, or contact your local public health unit for more information.

