



LET'S CLEAR THE AIR!

Proud to be a tobacco- and smoke-free campus

Supervisor Toolkit

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Communicating about the Tobacco-Free Policy

The Tobacco-Free Campus policy is part of our ongoing effort to ensure a healthy, productive, respectful environment in which to work, learn, and live. Our University buildings have been smoke-free for many years, and the expansion to a tobacco-free campus is effective July 1, 2015.

The success of this policy relies on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of each individual. In an effort to achieve maximum compliance with the new policy, all faculty, staff, students, alumni, and volunteers are encouraged to help carry out the policy at their facilities and sponsored activities. It is the intent of this policy that enforcement will be achieved primarily through education, awareness, and a spirit of cooperation.

As we acclimate to the new policy and become more aware of campus boundaries, it is important to remain courteous and respectful when reminding an employee, visitor, student, alumni, or contractor of the University's Tobacco-Free Campus policy. If, however, there are repeated reports of policy violation despite reminders of the policy requirements, a supervisor or manager will be asked to have a more direct conversation with their employee (staff, faculty, or student employee) to help resolve the concern. Only if the discussion and problem solving do not lead to a resolution will corrective action be implemented using established University policy for progressive disciplinary action.

Pocket policy cards are available from the University Wellness Initiative office at wellness@syr.edu or 315-443-5472. These cards may be given to anyone seen using tobacco or tobacco-related products on University property as a reminder of the policy.

Keep the "SMOKE" acronym in mind any time you choose to approach someone who is using tobacco products on campus.

S: "Smile" Introduce yourself.

M: "Make" the assumption that the person doesn't know the policy.

O: "Offer" resources for tobacco cessation.

K: "Kindly" remind the person of the tobacco-free policy.

E: "Enforce" the policy: Ask the person to stop using the tobacco on campus.

Below are some examples of situations you may encounter when sharing information about the policy on campus. We have prepared sample scripts or examples of nonconfrontational dialogue you may consider using when discussing the policy with an employee under your supervision.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT #1

Situation: You receive an initial report that an employee under your supervision is using tobacco products on campus grounds.

*Listen and have empathy for the employee's situation.
Be respectful.*

Conversation starter: "I know that this is a new policy and as a tobacco user, this change must be challenging for you. If you decide you are interested in tobacco cessation resources, I suggest you visit the tobacco-free campus website wellness.syr.edu/tobacco-free to see what's available to you as a SU employee. If you are not ready to quit, you will need to think about some strategies that will help you be in compliance with the policy while you are at work and on SU property."

Be direct and clear that this is an important policy to the University and it is an expectation that everyone adheres to the policy.

"Even though this is a new policy, it is important for you to understand that violations to the policy are not acceptable and I need your cooperation."

Offer options:

"You might want to consider taking advantage of the free tobacco-cessation classes sponsored by the University. If you are not ready to quit at this time, you will need to use tobacco products on your own time and on non-University property. Another option might be to consider using nicotine patch, gum, and/or lozenge while you are at work to manage cravings. These nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) are available at most pharmacies. Also, you can call the NYS Quitline 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) and they will send you a coupon for free NRT. **Always best to speak with your doctor prior to starting nicotine replacement therapy.**"

EXAMPLE SCRIPT #2

Situation: You receive repeated reports that an employee under your supervision is using tobacco products on campus.

Provide the employee with time to tell their side of the story.

Conversation starter: "It has been brought to my attention that you continue to use tobacco products on University property, and I would like to give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the information that was reported."

Summarize and repeat what you heard the employee say, to make sure you have clarity on the issue.

Response: "So what you're saying is.....(repeat what you heard)."

Gain commitment from employee. Ask employee to come up with action steps that will resolve the problem.

Response: "Now that we have discussed the importance of complying with the Tobacco-Free Campus policy, you need to create a plan that will enable you to stay in compliance with the policy while you are on campus. As we previously discussed, there are free tobacco-cessation resources available to you, including apps, the NYS Quitline, and even some tobacco-cessation support groups being run on campus. You can check out the tobacco-free website for more information about these options, and even when the next support group is being held, if you think that option may work for you."

Corrective action.

If resolution is not achieved through the direct conversation and the problem-solving strategies discussed with the employee, the supervisor may pursue consultation with the Office of Human Resources.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT #3

Situation: An employee asks for time away from work to attend an on-campus tobacco-cessation program.

The University is supportive of tobacco users who want to quit using tobacco products and, as such, has even contracted for tobacco-cessation support groups to meet on campus and be available during the work day, as a convenience and benefit to employees who use tobacco and want to quit through a support group. For on-campus tobacco-cessation classes, supervisors are encouraged to allow time away from work to attend, as paid work time for their first session. The support group session runs for a total of 7 hours. While initially this may seem like a large investment, ultimately the University feels this will result in greater productivity in the long run, as fewer smoke breaks are taken by employees who no longer use tobacco.

Conversation starter: “As your supervisor, I fully support you in your effort to become tobacco-free; let’s see what we can do to flex your schedule to accommodate you being able to attend the next on campus tobacco-cessation class.”

This time can be provided in different ways, based on the business needs of the department.

Regular work hours: Allow employees to attend on-campus tobacco-cessation classes as paid regular work time similar to any on-the-job training since these classes assist tobacco users to be in compliance with the new policy.

Flexible scheduling: If coverage of work duties is a concern, allow employees to come in early or stay late so that they may attend classes scheduled on-campus during the work day and still complete their work. If possible, the University would like to encourage supervisors to allow the support group as paid time, even if paid work time is flexed.

ADDITIONAL SCENARIOS

- An employee wants to attend a smoking-cessation class. How do I know that they are actually attending?

Attendance is taken at each meeting date. If you would like to verify attendance, please contact the University Wellness Initiative at 315-443-5472.

- An employee already attended a smoking-cessation class and it didn’t work/they stopped going before it ended. Now they want to attend another one. What do I do?

The University is supportive of tobacco users who want to quit using tobacco products and, as such, has even contracted for smoking-cessation support groups to be held on campus and be available during the work day, as a convenience and benefit to employees who use tobacco and want to quit through a support group. The University supports paid attendance at the first support group, but not for subsequent support groups. It’s up to you as a supervisor to allow an employee to flex their time to attend a second support group during the day. If this is not possible, SUNY Upstate offers the same smoking-cessation classes periodically to the community, and they are free. Information is available on the SUNY Upstate website, or they can contact the support group facilitator, Cindy Cary, for more information. Cindy can be reached at 315-464-4426.

- A non-tobacco using employee complains that their co-worker is allowed to attend a 7-hour smoking-cessation support group while they are working. How do I respond?

There are several tactics you can use. One would be to educate the employee about the addictive effects of nicotine, and that studies have shown that it takes between 5 and 7 times to quit. Therefore, the best way we can support this coworker is to support their attendance at a smoking-cessation support group, so they have healthier behaviors and can participate in work more fully.

Another tactic would be to talk to the worker about their feelings of frequent smoke breaks. Do they think it is fair that smokers have, until now, essentially been able to take multiple breaks through the day? While it may seem like 7 hours is a large investment, ultimately the University feels this will result in greater productivity in the long run, as fewer smoke breaks are taken by employees who no longer use tobacco.

QUESTIONS? For more information about the policy, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and tobacco-cessation resources, visit wellness.syr.edu/tobacco-free