



Tobacco-Free Outdoors, Tompkins County

Health

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability statewide, nationwide, worldwide.
- Secondhand smoke (SHS) is a class A carcinogen, for which the U.S. Surgeon General has determined there is no safe level of exposure.
- Brief exposure can trigger an asthma attack. Exposure contributes to and increases the risk of heart attack or stroke for individuals with chronic disease. Individuals being treated for cancer should not be exposed to SHS.
- Children are at increased risk from exposure to SHS.
- The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between tobacco companies and states was initiated to recoup Medicaid dollars spent on treating smoking caused disease. The settlement was for \$25 billion. Currently in NYS alone, tobacco related health care is \$10.4 billion annually, of which Medicaid covers \$6.6 billion

Families

- The U.S. Surgeon General has identified tobacco use as a “pediatric epidemic”.
- Tobacco use is higher among low SES youth.
- Nearly 90% of adult smokers started before age 18. The average age of tobacco use initiation in NYS is 13 years old.
- Youth perceptions of the risks associated with SHS are associated with smoking initiation. There is strong evidence that smoke-free policies decrease tobacco use among youth.
- Youth use of e-cigarettes and vaping products containing nicotine has risen dramatically over the last few years

Accessibility

- Individuals who are smoking or using vapor products or electronic cigarettes are effectively denying full access to those individuals at greatest risk from exposure.

Environment

- Cigarette butts are the single most littered item in the U.S. and worldwide, are not biodegradable, and are toxic to wildlife
- Discarded cigarettes leach heavy metals into the soil and water.
- Discarded cigarettes present a serious fire risk.
- Annual tobacco production is responsible for felling 20-50 million trees globally, and the use of 27 million pounds of pesticides in the U.S.

Community Norms

- All efforts to take tobacco out of the public landscape help to reinforce a tobacco-free social norm. Modeling a tobacco-free life helps current smokers quit and supports tobacco-free generations in the future. Tobacco marketing and modeling are causes of youth tobacco use.

Policy Promotion

- Sufficient signage is critical to promoting compliance.
- Literature should identify tobacco-free areas to support compliance.
- A policy should cover all products. Covering all products supports concerns about nicotine addiction, health impacts of tobacco use, and environmental impacts.
- A policy should cover all places. Exceptions, complicated boundaries, and designated smoking areas confuse those trying to comply with the rule and those trying to promote the rule.

Local examples

- Town of Lansing local law (2009): No smoking on property of Town Hall, Highway Barn, community center & library, playing fields.
- City of Ithaca Ordinance (2010): No smoking 25 feet of all city buildings, playgrounds, schools and day care, mobile vending; No smoking on The Commons and adjacent blocks, any city “pocket” parks, specified areas of Cass & Stewart, Waterfront Trail, Six Mile Creek, Ithaca Falls, Fuertes.
- Tompkins County Administrative Policy (2011): No smoking/ vaping on any county property owned or leased.
- Town of Ulysses Personnel Policy (2016): No tobacco use on town property.
- NYS Parks Rule (2015): Smoking prohibited in specified areas system-wide. At NYS Parks in Tompkins County this includes swimming areas and beaches, playgrounds, pavilions & shelters, comfort stations and bathhouse, within 50-ft of concessions (Taughannock).
- Cayuga Medical Center: No tobacco use entire property, all properties.
- NYS Parks policy by region and park: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/documents/GuidancePolicies/PolicyNonSmokingAreasStateParksHistoricSites.pdf>

