

Smoke Free Workplace Policy

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68.1 The department is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all Staff, including providing return to work opportunities for ill and injured Staff, consistent with all legislative obligations. Further information is available in the department's occupational health and safety (OH&S) policy and agreement, made in consultation with Staff and the Staff representative.

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1. Purpose/Principles

The aim of this guideline is to provide an overview of the Smoke Free Workplace Policy. This guideline also outlines the support and assistance available to staff to help them quit smoking and adhere to the Smoke Free Workplace Policy.

The Smoke Free Workplace Policy aligns with the [Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014](#) which demonstrates the department's commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff. The Health and Life Strategy which aims to support staff to make healthy lifestyle choices also provides for the Smoke Free Workplace Policy.

2. Quick Guide

On 1 February 2010 the then Department of Health and Ageing adopted the Smoke Free Workplace Policy prohibiting departmental staff from smoking while they are on duty (apart from official meal breaks) or when representing the department in any capacity.

On 22 May 2015, the Department of Health amended this policy to also include personal vaporisers, also known as electronic nicotine delivery systems (with or without nicotine) or electronic cigarettes.¹ Information on electronic cigarettes is available on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website: <https://www.tga.gov.au/community-qa/electronic-cigarettes>.

The department recognises that smoking is addictive and to help staff to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy the department offers support and assistance to help staff quit smoking.

3. Detailed Information

Definitions

Working hours

Working hours are those hours during which a staff member is on duty or representing the department.

Official meal break

An official meal break is the unpaid break taken after no longer than five hours continuous duty. This is usually between 12.30pm and 1.30pm or 12noon and 1pm for Northern Territory staff.

The Smoke Free Workplace Policy

The Smoke Free Workplace Policy applies to all ongoing and non-ongoing departmental staff, including State and Territory Office staff. The policy also applies to all contractors and visitors to the department's workplaces.

Under the Smoke Free Workplace Policy staff are not permitted to smoke, or use personal vaporisers, within 15 metres of any part of any department premises at any time.

Departmental staff are prohibited from smoking, or using personal vaporisers, while they are on duty or when representing the department in any capacity.

Application

Smoking or using personal vaporisers before or after working hours, or during a meal break, is not covered by the Smoke Free Workplace Policy, however the non-smoking zones around departmental premises apply at all times.

This Smoke Free Workplace Policy will apply if a staff member is attending an official function and staff will not be able to smoke, or use personal vaporisers, during any social activity initiated or organised by the department.

Reimbursement for smoking cessation activities

The department will provide reasonable reimbursement for staff to participate in an approved smoking cessation activity. This assistance is available for all staff regardless of location.

How to apply for reimbursement

- Staff members need to seek approval for a proposed smoking cessation approach and its anticipated cost **before** they can be reimbursed for any associated expenditure.
- To seek approval for the proposed program and expected costs, staff members should complete an [application for assistance to stop smoking form](#) and submit it to Health and Life in People Branch. Applications can be submitted via email to [Health and Life](#) or internal mail at MDP 355. Staff will be notified via email of the outcome of their application. When an application is approved the staff member must then pay for the item or service themselves before forwarding the invoice(s) and the receipt(s) to [Health and Life](#) for reimbursement.
- Where a staff member wishes to continue receiving support after they have been reimbursed for the full amount approved in their original application, they will need to submit a new application form. No further reimbursement of expenditure for smoking cessation will be provided until a new application is approved.

Cessation activities that may be supported

There are various smoking cessation methods available and what works for one person may not work for the next. In recognition of this, the department does not recommend a particular approach but is willing to support and encourage the method that best suits an individual staff member. Some approaches staff have chosen to undertake include (but are not limited to):

- attendance at a recognised quit smoking program;
- quit smoking literature and reference material;
- nicotine replacement therapy / medications recommended by a medical practitioner; and
- nicotine replacement products.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme covers nicotine replacement products if prescribed by a medical practitioner. The department will cover the balance of these products on presentation of a receipt.

Free support

There are a number of support mechanisms provided as part of the [National Tobacco Campaign](#) to help people to stop smoking. The Quitline and Quit Coach are two proven help support services that can help staff.

Quitline – 13 7848

- Quitline is a confidential telephone advice and information service where, for the cost of a local call (except mobile phones), a trained advisor can help people to plan and develop strategies to quit smoking and stay quit.
- Callers can speak to an advisor as many times as they wish, or use the Quitline call-back service. The call-back service is a series of calls which provide people support during the different phases of quitting.

Quit Pack

The Quit Pack provides practical information to help people quit smoking. The Quit Pack includes:

- the Quit book which will help with planning and preparing to quit and provide tips and strategies for quitting successfully;
- choosing the best way to quit which is a guide to choosing the services and products which would best help you increase your chance of quitting successfully; and
- information on how people can speak to a quit advisor.

The Quit Pack can be ordered over the phone free of charge by calling the Quitline on 13 7848.

Quit Coach

The Quit Coach is a free, confidential and interactive quitting tool available online at <http://www.quitcoach.org.au/>. The QuitCoach provides users with a personalised quit plan, based on their answers to questions about their motivation to quit, experiences of past attempts to quit and other important issues.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The department provides a free counselling service to staff. The EAP is available to provide advice and support on a range of matters, both work-related and personal, but is also available to assist staff to stop smoking. More information can be found on the [EAP pages](#) of the intranet.

Buddy system

Many people find the support of a ‘buddy’ to be really helpful when attempting to quit smoking. The buddy should be someone who can provide support when it is hard or stressful to be smoke-free.

Staff members could even offer to be a ‘buddy’ to another employee through a difficult time.

Mobile phone apps

Under the National Tobacco Campaign, to support those who are quitting smoking, the department has online quitting resources available – *My QuitBuddy* and *Quit for You, Quit for Two* mobile phone apps. The apps are free and can be downloaded to your iPhone or iPad from the [Apple iTunes online store](#) or for your android phone at [Google Play store](#) at: <http://www.quitnow.gov.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quit-buddy>.

Use of flextime

Flextime will not be available for breaks for smoking or for using personal vaporisers.

Support for managers and staff working with staff who are trying to quit

The Quitline (13 7848), the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) (which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), or the [Health & Life Coordinator](#) are available to help any manager or staff member supporting a staff member who is abstaining from smoking.

Failure to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy

Where staff do not comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy, discussions will be held with the staff member.

Managers and staff should work together to help ensure compliance with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy. This may include developing a plan for the staff member. Where a staff member refuses to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy, after suitable warnings have been given, the matter would be handled on a case by case basis. This may include consideration of the staff member's refusal to comply as a potential breach of the [APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#).

Further information

Further information on smoking and support for quitting can be found at:

- the [frequently asked questions about the Smoke-Free Workplace Policy](#) page available on the intranet;
- [Quitnow](#) – The National Tobacco Campaign;
- [Asthma Australia](#);
- [Australian Council on Smoking and Health](#);
- [Australian Lung Foundation](#);
- [Cancer Council](#); and
- [National Heart Foundation](#).

4. Responsibilities

Staff responsibilities

Staff responsibilities include:

- complying with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy;
- where necessary working with their manager to develop a plan for complying with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy; and
- where the staff member decides to apply for assistance submitting an [application for assistance to stop smoking form](#) to [Health and Life](#); and
- where the staff member is approved for assistance to stop smoking submitting all associated receipts to [Health and Life](#) so that they may complete the claim for payment process.

Manager responsibilities

Manager responsibilities include:

- supporting staff to quit smoking;
- reminding staff members about the responsibility to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy;
- where a staff member does not comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy working with the staff member to develop a plan to assist them to adhere to the policy;
- warning staff that continued refusal to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy could be considered a potential breach of the APS Code of Conduct; and

- where a staff member does not comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy after a plan to assist them has been developed and sufficient warnings have been given, working with People Management to develop a strategy for managing the non-compliance.

Health and Life Team responsibilities

Health and Life Team responsibilities include:

- providing staff assistance with completing application forms for assistance to stop smoking;
- assessing applications for assistance to stop smoking and advising applicants of the outcome; and
- where staff have been approved for assistance to stop smoking and demonstrate proof of purchase (by providing a receipt) completing the claim for payment process.

5. Delegations

There are no delegations associated with this guideline.

6. Legislation

- [Public Service Act 1999](#)
- [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 \(Cth\) \(PGPA Act\)](#)
- [APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#)

7. Related Topics, References and Forms

- [Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014](#)
- [People Strategy 2010 – 2015](#)
- [Application for assistance to stop smoking form](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about the SmokeFree Workplace Policy](#)

8. Version control

Version Number	Date of issue	Author(s)	Brief description of change
Version No: 1.0	28 May 2013	Employee Relations	In accordance with EA 2011-2014.
Version No: 1.1	18 June 2013	Employee Relations	<i>Public Service Amendment Act 2013</i> - changes to the Code of Conduct.
Version No: 2.0	22 May 2015	Employee Relations	Update legislation titles. Removal of 2 cessation activities. Inclusion of vaporiser use.