

# Tobacco-Free Park and Recreation Areas Promote Health!



## Parks are for everyone, right?

**Parks are built to promote healthy activities** and improve the quality of life for community members. Tobacco-free policies promote good health.

**Tobacco-free environments show a community's support** for the health, safety and welfare of community members.

**Tobacco-free policies help establish a community norm** that says tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults. When children see adults smoking in a family place like a park, they think smoking is acceptable and are more likely to copy the behavior.

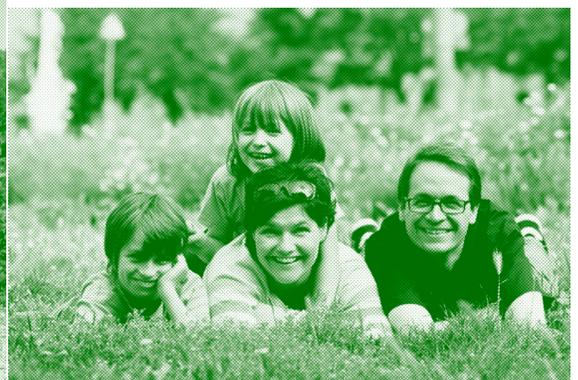
**Tobacco-free policies help reduce litter.** Cigarette filters aren't biodegradable – they'll stay around for a long time unless picked up.

## What's the big fuss about?

**Cigarette litter is dangerous.** Discarded cigarettes pollute land and water. Worse, yet, cigarette butts can be eaten by children, pets and wildlife. Ingesting cigarettes is hazardous!

**Secondhand smoke harms everyone.** The 2006 Surgeon General's Report on secondhand smoke concluded that secondhand smoke is a human cancer causing agent. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke.

**Secondhand smoke is harmful in outdoor settings, too.** Studys show that secondhand smoke levels in outdoor public places can reach levels as high as those found in indoor spaces where smoking is permitted.



# What can we do about it?

## **Local governments can enact policies to restrict tobacco use.**

Neither federal nor state law prohibits local governments (cities, counties, etc.) from regulating tobacco use outdoors.

## **A local government can pass a policy or an ordinance to restrict tobacco use in parks and recreation areas.**

Park policies cover city or county-owned parks. They are established by local park boards and are often approved by city councils or county boards. People who violate a policy can be asked to stop the behavior or leave the premises.

An ordinance is a local law, generally passed by a legislative body (city council) and signed by a city executive (mayor), and then enforced by local police and district attorneys. Violating an ordinance can result in a fine.

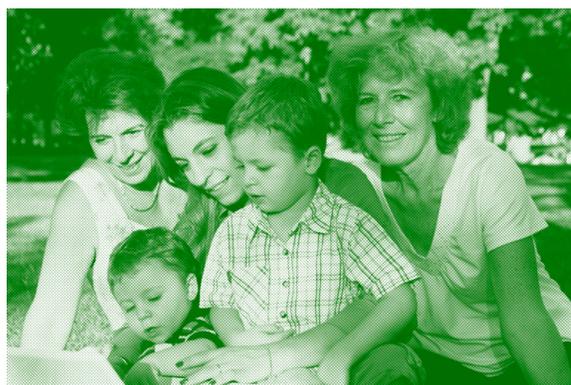
## Won't policies and laws keep people from using parks?

### **Tobacco-free policies for parks and other recreation areas ensure that all citizens have a healthy place to relax and play.**

Smokers already work, eat, shop and live in smoke-free environments. It seems logical to include parks and other recreation areas as well. Surveys conducted in many communities across the U.S. show that the majority of citizens support tobacco-free parks.

### **Tobacco-free policies are similar to ones that prohibit alcohol use, littering and pets off leash.**

Each one of these policies are established to protect the health and safety of all citizens.



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