

Smoke Free Policy

NT Health policy to protect and promote the best health outcomes for staff, patients and clients of our services

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Definitions	Full form The following definitions are used in this document
Environmental Tobacco Smoke	ETS is the combination of smoke emitted from the burning end of a cigarette or other tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by the smoker. ETS contains thousands of chemicals, at least 250 of which are known to be carcinogenic or otherwise toxic.
Nicotine Replacement Therapy	NRT is a pharmacotherapy used to manage the symptoms of nicotine dependence and withdrawal by replacing nicotine formerly obtained from tobacco. Various NRT products are available including transdermal patches, lozenges, sublingual tablets, gum and inhalers.
Contractor	For the purposes of this policy, a contractor is a person who is not an employee of DoH and who carries out duties on behalf of DoH and/or on DoH premises. Examples include electricians, plumbers and builders.
Enclosed Workplace	A place or, part of a place, of employment (other than an enclosed public place) that has a ceiling or roof and (except for doorways and passages) is completely or substantially enclosed by walls, windows, blinds, curtains or other objects, materials or things.
Vaping	For the purpose of this policy, vaping in relation to an electronic cigarette, means using the electronic cigarette to generate or release an aerosol or vapour for inhalation by the user in a manner that replicates, or produces an experience similar to, smoking.
Herbal or non-tobacco products	A tobacco product includes a product, the main ingredient of which is plant matter (other than tobacco) the possession of which is lawful, that is used or is intended to be used for human consumption by smoking.
Authorised Officer	Has the same meaning as in the Tobacco Control Act 2002.

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1. Target Audience

The Smoke Free Policy applies to all Department of Health (DoH) services (including DoH funded services and organisations), facilities, vehicles and grounds.

The policy extends to all DoH staff, contractors, volunteers, patients, clients and visitors across the Northern Territory while they are providing or accessing DoH properties and services. Exceptions may apply on hospital campuses, or as otherwise approved by the following under specific arrangements:

- Chief Health Officer – DoH
- Regional Executive Director – Top End Region (TER)
- Regional Executive Director – Big Rivers Region (BRR)
- Regional Executive Director – East Arnhem Region (EAR)
- Regional Executive Director – Central Australia Region (CAR)
- Regional Executive Director – Barkly Region (BR)

2. Policy Purpose

The DoH Smoke Free Policy has been developed to protect and promote the best health outcomes for its staff and for the patients and clients of our services.

The Policy has been developed to:

- Safeguard our staff against the health impacts of tobacco smoke, including environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).
- Protect those who use our services, vehicles and visit our facilities and grounds.
- Promote smoke free environments as a positive social norm for DoH.
- Encourage and support staff and clients to quit smoking through cessation services and programs.

3. Policy Statement

The DoH maintains a Smoke Free Policy as an example to lead organisational and corporate commitment to reducing tobacco related harm in the workforce and to our clientele. This policy and associated documents set an example, which can easily be adopted by large and small agencies and organisations alike.

The Smoke Free Policy also extends to smoke from herbal or non-tobacco products in accordance with the *Tobacco Control Act 2002*.

Application to Electronic Cigarettes

Any reference in this Smoke Free Policy to smoke or smoking includes vaping or other use of electronic cigarettes.

4. Policy Details

Staff

Staff are not permitted to smoke anywhere on DoH premises, facilities or vehicles nor whilst working off-site.

Staff may smoke only during official breaks and must leave DoH grounds to do so. This is consistent with staff employment contracts and conditions, which do not include smoking breaks.

Staff living in DoH accommodation are required to comply with the DoH Smoke Free Policy, however they are able to smoke outdoors, preferably out of public view, on their accommodation site outside of their official work hours.

Patients and Clients

Patients and clients of DoH will receive information that DoH services and premises are smoke-free through a range of communication strategies, including printed materials and advice from service providers.

Inpatients, outpatients and community based patients and clients are encouraged to discuss their tobacco use prior to admission where they will be offered support to cease smoking through counselling and, where warranted and clinically appropriate, NRT or other medication. These will be provided free of charge to patients during their hospital stay. Patients are also supported to undertake smoking cessation programs following discharge.

Hospital campuses may provide designated smoking areas for patients of the DoH who are unable or unwilling to quit smoking. Smoking may only take place in these designated outdoor smoking areas. Patients are not permitted to smoke elsewhere on hospital and health centre grounds, buildings or in DoH vehicles.

Patients are also requested not to smoke when receiving services from visiting DoH personnel. Staff conducting patient or client visits in the community can decline to service a patient or client who refuses to cease smoking during a staff visit. This visit may then be reprioritised against other community visits.

Visitors, Contractors and Volunteers

Visitors, contractors and volunteers of DoH facilities and grounds are not permitted to smoke on any hospital or health centre including on any part of the grounds, carpark and buildings surrounds; or in DoH vehicles.

5. Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are effective procedures in place to maintain a smoke-free environment in DoH facilities.

Regional Executive Directors

On 1 July 2021, Top End Health Service, Central Australia Health Service and Department of Health became a single integrated organisation, the Department of Health, known as NT Health with five service

delivery regions. The new operational units are funded by the Department of Health and are the principal providers of health services in the NT. The Top End Region (TER), Big Rivers Region (BRR), East Arnhem Region (EAR), Central Australia Region (CAR) and Barkly Region (BR) are each managed by a Regional Executive Director (RED) who report directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

The RED is responsible for the overall adherence to the Smoke-Free Policy across their respective health services until 30 June 2021 when a new structure is expected to be implemented.

Line Management

Managers and supervisors are responsible for encouraging compliance with the policy and are required to remind staff of their Workplace Health and Safety (WH&S) obligations. WH&S information can be viewed from the DoH intranet home page.

Non-compliance with the policy by staff can result in disciplinary action. Information on the disciplinary process as well as templates for corrective counselling agreements are available from the Smoke Free Policy webpage.

The DoH actively encourages and supports staff to quit smoking, through various free-of-charge smoking cessation programs. This may include Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and other medications. Advice for management and staff on cessation options are available in the DoH Smoke-Free Procedures.

All DoH Employees

All DoH staff have an obligation to ensure that all patients, clients, volunteers, visitors and contractors are aware of the departments smoke-free policy. In instances where an individual is non-compliant, security or in the case of staff, line management are to be notified and disciplinary action is to be taken against the smoker. Disciplinary action may consist of an infringement notice for staff, patients, clients, volunteers, contractors and visitors. In addition, DoH staff may also receive corrective counselling through line management.

DoH Patients, Clients, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors

All patients, clients and visitors of DoH facilities will be required to adhere to the DoH Smoke-Free Policy whilst on departmental premises. Non-compliance may result in the person (in breach of the Policy) being required to leave the smoke free premises or being issued with an infringement notice by an Authorised Officer. All patients who identify themselves as smokers will be offered Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and support to quit smoking.

Department Funded Services and Organisations

All agencies delivering services on behalf of DoH must be reminded of their obligations to provide a smoke-free enclosed workplace within all service agreements or contracts.

Service agreements and contracts between external agencies and DoH shall also stipulate that outdoor areas of the service must be smoke-free. DoH will support all external service providers to meet their smoke-free obligations through information and resource provision.

Failure by the service to comply with the smoke-free requirements should be managed in the same manner as any other breach of the service agreement conditions. As a first step any service that is non-compliant should be encouraged to develop a smoke-free area plan, in accordance with the Tobacco Control Act 2002, advising how the service will achieve compliance. Where necessary the service should be assisted to

take an incremental approach to achieving compliance which can be detailed as part of the smoke-free area plan.

6. Designated Smoking Areas

Where appropriate, a Northern Territory hospital campus may provide up to two designated patient outdoor smoking areas without the need for an exemption from the Chief Health Officer. Basic amenities such as seating for people with poor mobility and a cover for rain and/or sun can be provided in the smoking area.

Designated areas must comply with the outdoor smoking area guidelines, which include:

- be in an outdoor area with a maximum of two walls or screens;
- be out of line of sight from any main entrances to the hospital;
- comply with tobacco control legislation;
- prohibit the consumption of food and drink within the designated area; and
- display signage: indicating the area is designated for smoking; food and drink are not to be consumed within the area; and promoting the Quitline number.

Staff may assist a person with mobility problems to access a designated outdoor smoking area. Staff may however, decline to offer assistance to avoid exposure to ETS, or designate this assistance as a low priority against other duties.

7. Policy Context and Implementation

Tobacco use is a significant problem for the Northern Territory (NT), and national studies estimate smoking is linked to 58 diseases and injuries and responsible for 7.9% of the total Australian burden of disease. The total cost of smoking related harm in the NT was estimated to have been \$764 million in 2005-06

Evidence of the benefits for introducing comprehensive smoke free policies is undisputed. Smoke free areas are well accepted in the community, compliance is generally high, and substantial improvements in air quality have been documented.

This policy will be promoted through the DoH workforce and will be included in orientation programs for new staff.

DoH premises are to have clear signs to advise where smoking prohibitions are in force (and, if available, any exempt areas for patients and clients).

All DoH contract and service managers must ensure that service arrangements for all organisations and services funded by the DoH specify the Smoke-Free Policy requirements and request a copy of the agency's smoke-free policy as an annual reporting requirement.

Compliance can be defined as Departmental staff, visitors, clients, volunteer's, patients and contractors abstaining from smoking on departmental premises services, facilities, vehicles and grounds with smokers utilising designated smoking areas*.

Staff are to refer to the Smoke-Free Procedure.

**Please note that all DoH staff are prohibited from using designated smoking areas. Employees who wish to smoke while at work may only do so during unpaid award rest breaks (e.g. lunch and dinner) and will need to smoke outside the perimeter of each DoH site.*

8. Key Associated Documents

Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned and Supporting Documents

[Smoke-Free Procedure](#)

[Tobacco Control Act 2002](#)

[Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993](#)

[Work Place Health and Safety](#)

9. Document Quality Assurance

Implementation

This policy will be promoted through the DoH workforce and will be included in orientation programs for new staff.

Responsibility

DoH Branch Line Management

Review

To be reviewed in 2 years

Responsibility

Senior Policy Officer, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch

Tobacco Compliance and Liaison Officer, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch

Director - Clinical Policy and Planning, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch

Evaluation

Performance measures include, but are not limited to, informal assessment processes and records maintained by line managers, Human Resources Managers and other enforcement agencies.

Responsibility

Senior Policy Officer, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch

Tobacco Compliance and Liaison Officer, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch

Director - Clinical Policy and Planning, Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Branch