

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

VOLUME 3: HUMAN RESOURCE POLICIES

TITLE: SMOKE-FREE WORK ENVIRONMENT

EFFECTIVE: October 27, 1994

1.0 SCOPE

1.1 Authority

1.1.1 This policy is issued under the authority of Cabinet Minute No. 94-40, dated October 27, 1994.

1.2 Application

1.2.1 This policy applies to all employees employed under the Public Service Act and the Education Act, including casual and contract employees. The work environment includes the premises occupied by all departments, as defined in Policy 3.1.

1.3 Purpose and Principles

1.3.1 The Yukon Government recognizes that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard. The Yukon Government recognizes that the employer is responsible for creating a smoke-free environment to improve the quality of work life and promote the health of employees.

1.3.2 As a concerned and conscientious employer, the Yukon Government does not permit smoking in government premises, except as allowed by the exemption of this policy.

1.3.3 It is the purpose of this policy to establish a framework for providing a smoke-free work environment for government employees. Creating a smoke-free work environment will improve the quality of work life and promote employee health.

1.4 Background

1.4.1 Research has established that secondhand (sidestream) smoke is a serious health hazard. If not controlled, sidestream smoke can have short term effects such as irritation to eyes/respiratory tract and allergies, as well as long term effects such as impaired lung function and lung cancer.

1.4.2 It is the responsibility of an employer to provide a healthy work environment and to promote the health of employees. Education of employees who do smoke and employees who do not smoke is important in providing a smoke-free work environment; cooperation and conscientiousness on the part of the employee and the employer is essential.

1.4.3 On January 1, 1990, all Yukon Government premises became smoke-free work environments.

1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 Work environments are all premises owned or leased by the Yukon Government and occupied by Yukon Government employees; this includes government vehicles and equipment.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Public Service Commission

2.1.1 The Public Service Commission is responsible for administering this policy and providing employees with education/awareness related to smoking.

2.1.2 Signs indicating that smoking is not permitted on the premises will be prominently displayed in Yukon Government premises. The signs are available from the Employee Assistance and Health Promotion (EAHP) office in the Public Service Commission.

2.2 Departments

2.2.1 Departments are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that employees and the general public are aware that smoking is not permitted in Yukon government premises;
- b) ensuring that employees comply with this policy and that appropriate disciplinary procedures are applied for breach of policy;
- c) recommending to the Public Service Commission exemptions from this policy where exemptions are warranted.

2.3 Employees

2.3.1 All premises owned or leased by the Yukon Government and occupied by Yukon Government employees are designated as smoke-free work environments, except those areas approved as "exemptions". Government vehicles and equipment are designated as smoke-free work environments when occupied by government employees.

2.3.2 Employees are permitted to leave the workplace to smoke except in those work areas approved as "exemptions", during normal coffee/lunch breaks.

2.3.3 Employees are not restricted from smoking outside government premises or government vehicles.

2.3.4 Educational resources and activities related to smoke-free work environments, including smoking cessation programs, are available for employees through the Employee Assistance and Health Promotion (EAHP) office.

2.4 General Public

2.4.1 While it is intended that all occupants of Yukon Government premises will respect this policy, the individual preference of visiting members of the public will prevail.

3.0 EXEMPTIONS

3.0.1 Exemptions to the ban on smoking in the workplace shall be permitted only after a careful review to justify the need for exemptions. Exemptions will be based on the unique circumstances which make the enforcement of the policy impractical or unreasonable. The following are considered unique circumstances that would warrant careful review:

3.0.2 When the work environment comprises centres or institutions where people live (such as nursing homes, residences, correctional centres, etc.), an exemption may be considered to permit residents to smoke in a designated area.

3.0.3 Employees normally would not be permitted to smoke in areas designated as smoking areas for residents. However, if the situation is such that the health and/or safety of the residents would be compromised by the employees leaving the work environment for a smoke break then an exemption may be considered to permit residents and employees to smoke in a designated area.

3.0.3 Exemptions to the policy may be made by the Public Service Commission on recommendation from a deputy head.

4.0 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The disciplinary procedures for employees who smoke in Yukon Government premises, other than in the case of an exemption, will comply with the standard disciplinary procedures for breach of policy.