



SMOKE-FREE GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHWAY SPONSORED GROUPS

1. HEALTHWAY'S SMOKE FREE REQUIREMENTS

1.1 Introduction

From 1 July 2010 Healthway introduced a new condition of funding that all organisations entering into a sponsorship contract with Healthway must ensure that all areas under their control are smoke-free for the duration of the contract.

The new requirement builds on previous sponsorship conditions and maintains Healthway's position at the leading edge of tobacco control in WA, ahead of state legislative requirements. Healthway introduced comprehensive indoor smoke-free policies in 1996 and from 2006 required sponsored groups to maintain all outdoor seated and viewing areas as smoke-free.

In recent years an increasing number of Healthway-sponsored groups have been willing to go completely smoke-free, in recognition of the potential benefits for participants and audiences, and for the environment. The new Healthway policy requires all sponsored groups to introduce and implement smoke-free policies.

These guidelines set out Healthway's expectations for sponsored groups and provide some practical guidance on meeting the new policy requirement.

1.2 Healthway's commitment to tobacco control

Healthway (the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation) was established in 1991 through state tobacco control legislation, and was established as an independent statutory body reporting to the Minister for Health. More recently, Healthway's work was incorporated into the Tobacco Products Control Act 2006 (part 5).

Healthway's goal is to promote and support healthy lifestyles to reduce the burden of preventable disease in Western Australia. Since its inception, one of Healthway's highest priorities has been to reduce harm from tobacco.

1.3 Why is tobacco still a problem?

Nearly 15% of West Australian adults smoke. Although the rates have more than halved since the late 1980's before Healthway was established, tobacco smoking is still responsible for around 1,200 deaths each year in Western Australia.

Research shows that half of all smokers will die prematurely, and half of these will die in middle age. Smoking is a major cause of heart disease, stroke, cancer and a range of other chronic diseases.

Second hand smoke also causes illness and death in non-smokers. It is now well-established that second hand smoke is a cause of heart disease and lung cancer in non-smoking adults. It also causes and worsens respiratory problems such as asthma and can be particularly harmful to young children.

1.4 Why the concern about outdoor areas?

There is growing evidence that smoking affects air quality in outdoor locations such as alfresco cafes and playgrounds. A study measuring the cigarette smoke levels in a variety of outdoor locations revealed that a non-smoker sitting near a smoker in an outdoor area may be exposed to similar levels of cigarette smoke to indoor bars where smoking is permitted.¹

Children and young people typically over-estimate the number of smokers in the community and are influenced by the behaviour of adults around them. Creating recreational environments that are 100% smoke-free sends a powerful message to young people that smoking is no longer the norm.

Cigarettes are the most littered item in the environment, making up almost 50% of litter in urban areas. Cigarette butts are not biodegradable and can take up to five years to break down. Outdoor smoke free policies drastically reduce the number of cigarette butts in the environment and can significantly reduce associated clean-up costs.¹

1.5 Smoke free policies are good for business

The International Agency for Research on Cancer found that introducing smoke free policies provided net benefits to business, with no adverse effects on overall sales in the hospitality industry.² More than 85% of adults in WA are non-smokers and independent research conducted at different venues by the Health Promotion Evaluation Unit at UWA has consistently found high levels of community support for smoke-free environments.

Smoking bans support smokers who are trying to quit as well as reducing their overall tobacco consumption. A 2006 study found that 54% percent of smokers who had tried to quit reported that seeing other smokers was a trigger to relapse, with 40% stating that smelling a cigarette was a trigger to resume smoking.¹

1.6 Smoke free legislation in WA

In Western Australia, smoking is prohibited in all enclosed public places including licensed premises. This includes shopping centres, theatres, airports, cinemas, cafes and restaurants, as well as venues such as pubs, sporting clubs, night clubs and licensed restaurants. In the second half of 2010 new legislation will be enacted in WA, prohibiting smoking in al fresco areas, outdoor playing areas and on beaches between the safe swimming flags.³

2. HEALTHWAY'S EXPECTATIONS OF SPONSORED GROUPS

From 1 July 2010 Healthway introduced a new condition of funding that all organisations entering into a sponsorship contract with Healthway must ensure that all areas under their control are smoke-free for the duration of the contract.

Healthway requires sponsored groups to use their best endeavours to ensure that the policy is implemented and enforced in all areas under their control. This means all areas that are within the boundaries of an enclosed event or activity, and for events or activities that are not enclosed such as those held on a public open space; all areas where audiences or spectators congregate to access or view the activity must be promoted and maintained as smoke-free.

The requirement also means that organisations must develop and implement a smoke-free policy in other areas away from the sponsored event of activity, but which

are still under the control of the sponsored organisation. The policy must apply to all indoor and outdoor venues, grounds and other locations used by employees, visitors, officials, patrons, players and audiences/spectators, which are under the control of the sponsored group for the duration of their contract with Healthway. Please note that special considerations are given to local governments in Section 3 below.

Sponsored organisations are encouraged to use the following methods to ensure that patrons are aware of and compliant with the smoke-free policy:

2.1 Pre-event publicity and signage

Sponsored organisations should make it clear in all pre-event publicity that the organisation has a smoke-free policy and that sponsored activities or events will be smoke-free. This could include, but is not limited to; media advertising, pre-event literature or programs, fliers and web-site information. Signage should also be used to make it clear that the venue or event is smoke-free. Where possible, public address announcements should be used to remind patrons that they cannot smoke.

2.2 Entrances and other areas

In most circumstances, smokers will have the option to leave an event or venue temporarily if they wish to smoke. It is important however to ensure that smokers do not congregate close to entrance and exit-ways or on busy thoroughfares used by other patrons who are entering or leaving the venue. In such cases, the smoke-free policy should to be extended to areas such as entrances, thoroughfares and enclosed car parks as appropriate.

2.3 Special events with no re-admission

The conditions of an alcohol licence for major events may sometimes prevent patrons from re-entering the venue once they leave, thereby preventing smokers from exiting to smoke. In such cases, sponsored organisations may consider it necessary to create a special area for smokers. Healthway may, at its sole discretion, approve these arrangements by exception and on a case by case basis. These areas should be on the boundary of the venue where possible, well away from the main activities and should not provide a view of the activity. Smokers should not be allowed to take refreshments or alcoholic beverages into the smoking area. Sponsored organisations will be required to provide evidence to justify that exit and

re-entry to a venue is not possible and/or outside the control of the sponsored organisation.

2.4 Enforcement

Breaches of smoke-free policies most often occur because patrons were simply not aware of them. Experience has shown that in the majority of cases smoking bans are not difficult to enforce as long as patrons are well-informed both prior to, and at the event or activity itself. Education is generally the most effective and sustainable approach, and patrons are generally compliant if they are exposed to clear signage and information. People who smoke in areas covered by a ban may find themselves informed by others in the area that smoking is prohibited, and in many cases this is sufficient to persuade smokers to stop.

In the case of major events with large crowds, it is important that security staff are well briefed on dealing with breaches of the policy. This includes politely asking smokers to stop, and giving warnings that they may be removed from the venue if they refuse.

3. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Healthway recognises that the requirement to ensure that all areas under the control of the sponsored organisation are maintained as smoke-free for the duration of the contract may pose some special challenges for local governments.

As a minimum, it is expected that local governments who receive Healthway sponsorship for an event or series of events will maintain smoke-free policies in all indoor and outdoor areas where the sponsored event or other activities associated with the sponsored event are taking place. This could include parks, sporting fields, beaches, recreation grounds or even local streets, depending on the sponsored event or activity.

Healthway expects local governments to use their best endeavours to promote and enforce smoke-free policies in these areas using some or all of the methods outlined in Section 2.1 above.

As discussed in sections 1.4 and 1.5 of this document, there is growing community support for smoke-free outdoor areas, particularly in areas frequented by families and children. In other States in Australia, Councils have responded to community interest by introducing outdoor smoke-free policies in their local communities. Councils in WA may wish to consider using the opportunity of Healthway sponsorship to introduce a local law that builds on Healthway's smoke-free requirements, for example by banning smoking on all playing fields, sporting grounds and sporting facilities, and at all events run or sponsored by the Council.

To assist local Councils develop their own smoke-free outdoor policies, the Heart Foundation, The Cancer Council NSW, the Australian Medical Association NSW and Action on Smoking and Health Australia have developed a comprehensive policy resource kit for local government.¹ This resource kit includes a sample Council Smoke-free Environment Policy, case studies, frequently asked questions and guidance on challenges such as enforcement and gaining community support. A common concern from Councils is in relation to the enforcement of smoke-free outdoor policies, with many councils expressing reluctance to introduce bans that require labour intensive policing. In reality however, the experience in NSW shows that Councils which have introduced policies have found these to be largely self enforcing, with overall good compliance from the public.

References

1. Heart Foundation. Local Government Smoke-free Outdoor Areas. Web-based resource kit for local government comprising five fact sheets.
http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/Healthy_Living/Smoking/Prevention_Activities/Smoke_Free_Outdoor_Areas/Pages/default.aspx
2. World Health Organisation. Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. 2009
3. Government of Western Australia. Tobacco Products Control Amendment Act 2009. www.slp.wa.gov.au