

# Preparing for a Smoke-Free Illinois

## Employers Checklist

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### Step 1: Communication

- Organize a transition committee.**  
Include employees from several areas and levels of the business.
- Communicate about the new policy.**  
Use e-mail, meetings, bulletin boards, newsletters, payroll stuffers, and/ or table tents to provide information on the reasons for a Smoke-Free Illinois and benefits of the change. See sample article and memo.
- Post your smoke-free (or tobacco-free) policy.**  
Redistribute your company's policy and explain how Smoke-Free Illinois will affect it. If your company does not have a tobacco policy, see the sample provided for ideas.
- Provide in-service trainings.**  
Train managers and other key employees on the new policy, including what to say to visitors or other employees who wish to smoke.
- Promote quit smoking resources.**  
Many smokers consider quitting when smoke-free laws go into effect. Offer your employees support by promoting quit smoking resources and/ or organizing a quit smoking group at your worksite. See information in this packet for available services.

### Step 2: Implementation

- Post smoke-free signage.**  
Signage must be posted at every entrance. It is also helpful to post signs in areas where smoking was previously allowed.
- Remove ashtrays.**  
According to state law, ashtrays must be removed from all smoke-free areas. This includes 15 feet from all doorways, windows that open, and intake vents.
- Designate an outdoor smoking area.**  
Let your staff and visitors know where they can smoke, if at all, on company property. Consider creating an outdoor smoking area by placing a bench and ashtray at least 15 feet away from doorways, windows that open, and intake vents.
- Implement and enforce the new policy.**  
Kind but firm enforcement of any new policy shortens the transition period and increases compliance among employees and visitors.

### Step 3: Follow-up

- Follow-up with employees.**  
Evaluate the progress of implementation and troubleshoot problems/ concerns.
- Continue to promote quit smoking services.**
- Continue to enforce the policy.**
- Be positive.**  
Length of adjustment is typically shorter when management is supportive of the change.

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## Sample Memo

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To: All [Company Name] employees

From:

Date:

Re: [Company Name] Smoke-Free Policy

As an employer, management is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable and productive work environment for all employees. The Environmental Protection Agency declared secondhand smoke to be a “Class A carcinogen” known to cause cancer in non-smokers. Additionally, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that the simple separation of smokers and non-smokers within the same air space does not eliminate the exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke.

In light of these findings and the new Smoke-Free Illinois Act which takes effect on January 1, 2008, [company name] shall be entirely smoke-free effective [effective date]. For your convenience, [company name] has created an outdoor smoking area located at [location/description of outdoor smoking area].

[Company name] acknowledges that tobacco use is a matter of personal choice and is not requiring tobacco users to quit. The new policy only states that there be no smoking in company buildings and within 15 feet from doorways, windows and vents.

Copies of the policy will be distributed to all employees. Signs will be posted in appropriate places. All tobacco vending machines and ashtrays will be removed as of [date].

As we move toward a smoke-free work environment, smokers and nonsmokers need to work together to ensure a safe and healthy workplace and proper implementation of the new state law. Between now and [effective date], you will receive more information to ensure that implementation of the policy goes smoothly.

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## Sample Newsletter Article

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*The article below contains information on a variety of topics regarding Smoke-Free Illinois. Select the paragraphs that are appropriate for your newsletter.*

On January 1, 2008, Illinois will become the 22<sup>nd</sup> smoke-free state in the nation. Beginning in the New Year, there will be no more smoking in any indoor workplace or public place. This includes all offices, warehouses, factories, transportation facilities/ garages, private clubs, and banquet halls, as well as restaurants, bars, and bowling alleys.

The only exceptions are some tobacco retailers, 25% of hotel rooms, and some nursing home rooms. People may still smoke in their cars and homes, as long as their home is not used as an office open to the public or as a licensed day care facility.

Cities, villages, and counties may have their own smoke-free laws to make more areas smoke-free, such as outdoor dining and playgrounds. Local laws, however, cannot allow smoking where the State Law does not allow it.

As a result of the Smoke-Free Illinois Act and the health risk secondhand smoke has on our employees and visitors, [company name] will be implementing a new smoke-free policy on [effective date]. After this date, there will be no smoking anywhere indoors or within 15 feet from doorways, windows, and vents. For your convenience, [company name] has created an outdoor smoking area located at [location/ description of outdoor smoking area]. Please notify visitors of this new policy.

Towns and states that have already gone smoke-free have seen a reduction in asthma attacks, heart attacks, and cancer rates. They protect the health of customers, but more importantly, the health of the workers who could be exposed to secondhand smoke for full eight hour shifts.

Research shows that companies with smoke-free policies save an average of 10% on cleaning costs and up to seven percent on construction and maintenance. There is a significant decreased risk of fire, as cigarettes are cited as the number one cause of fire. Smoke-free businesses also report lower health insurance costs, increased productivity, and reduced absenteeism.

In addition, smoke-free laws actually have a positive economic effect on restaurants and bars. Although there tends to be a dip in business right after a smoke-free law takes effect, especially in cold months like January, restaurants and bars can ultimately expect an increase in revenue. Research shows that after time, business will go up as people begin to discover establishments they may have previously avoided because of the smoky air.

The Illinois Department of Public Health is currently working on detailed regulations for implementation of this Act. For up to date information and frequently asked questions, visit their website at [www.smoke-free.illinois.gov](http://www.smoke-free.illinois.gov).

The Kendall County Health Department can also provide information about secondhand smoke, the Smoke-Free Illinois Act, and programs to help people quit smoking. Contact the Health Department at (630) 553-9100 or visit our website at [www.kendallhealth.org](http://www.kendallhealth.org).