

## **MARIN COUNTY SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS POLICY**

### ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)***

#### **1. Why do we have this law?**

The Marin County Board of Supervisors adopted this law May 17, 2016 to improve the health and safety of people visiting and working at county facilities. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death. The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Given this data, and our role as service providers for thousands of people in the county, the Board of Supervisors adopted this law to create a smoke-free environment for employees and visitors. The new policy is similar to those enacted by local jurisdictions throughout the U.S. and Canada.

#### **2. Where is smoking prohibited?**

Smoking shall be prohibited in all Unenclosed Areas owned, leased or operated solely by and for the County of Marin. Smoking shall be prohibited in all vehicles owned, leased or operated by the county including buses and other means of public transit under the authority of the county.

#### **3. What is considered “smoking?” and therefore prohibited by the law?**

Use of cigarettes, cigars, water pipes, pipes, hookahs, marijuana (including medical marijuana) and electronic smoking devices, such as e-cigarettes, and vapor pens.

#### **4. When does this law take effect?**

Marin County Health and Human Services campuses have been 100% smoke-free per county policy since February 1, 2012. All other properties owned or leased by the county will become 100% smoke-free on June 17, 2016.

#### **5. To whom does the law apply?**

This law applies to anyone in a building, vehicle or on the grounds of a property owned or leased by Marin County, including employees, patients, visitors, vendors, and subcontractors.

#### **6. Why are electronic smoking devices included in this law?**

The State Health Officer does not consider electronic smoking devices, such as electronic cigarettes and vapor pens, to be safe. There is a growing public health concern that the use of electronic smoking devices in public places may undermine smoke-free ordinances and increase social acceptance of smoking, especially among youth. There is also a concern that they may trigger relapse in those who are trying to quit smoking. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved smoking cessation aids, such as nicotine gum, nicotine inhalers, and patches, are not prohibited by this law, and are helpful in going smoke-free.

#### **7. Which areas or properties are protected by this law?**

This law applies to buildings, vehicles and properties owned or leased by the county. Smoking, including use of electronic smoking devices, is subject to local laws elsewhere. For more information on local laws, visit: [smoke-freemarin.com](http://smoke-freemarin.com).

#### **8. Can I smoke in my personal vehicle?**

Smoking or use of electronic smoking devices is not permitted in your personal vehicle, whether parked or in motion, if it is located on property owned or leased by the county.

**9. How do I know what property is owned or leased by the county?**

The County does not own the sidewalks and streets that border its properties. We ask that staff and visitors be courteous if leaving the property to smoke or use electronic smoking devices by disposing of their tobacco butts or other waste in appropriate receptacles and being respectful of others nearby.

**10. Are there designated smoking areas on properties owned or leased by the county?**

No. Ash canisters in existing smoking areas will be removed.

**11. How is the law being enforced?**

This law is designed to be enforced through signage and education. However, staff that violates the law may be subject to disciplinary action. As this law is a county law, Sheriff's deputies may also issue citations.

**12. What should I do if I see someone smoking or using electronic smoking devices on property owned or leased by the county?**

You can help make Marin County smoke-free. If you feel comfortable you may respectfully inform these individuals of the County law prohibiting smoking or using electronic smoking devices anywhere on the property. Most employees and visitors are respectful of smoke-free laws and will comply when made aware of the policy.

**13. How should managers/supervisors talk to employees about the policy?**

We recommend that managers/supervisors remind employees of this policy and seek their cooperation with compliance. It may be a life-saving intervention.

**14. What should managers/supervisors do if one of their employees violates the policy?**

A face-to-face meeting with the employee to discuss concerns is always the best place to start. The following tips can help:

- A) Begin with a verbal reminder of the policy;
- B) Emphasize that you don't expect or require the employee to quit smoking, but that the employee must comply with the smoke-free policy while in buildings, vehicles and on properties owned or leased by the County,
- C) If the employee indicates an **interest in quitting**, direct him or her to Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) at 415-755-2334, the California Smokers Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS and online at [www.nobutts.org](http://www.nobutts.org), or Marin County Tobacco Related Disease Control Program at 415-473-3020. Employees have access to free smoking cessation resources available through our health insurance providers (e.g. Kaiser offers group classes and/or telephonic coaching);
- D) If verbal reminders have not worked, then provide a copy of the ordinance to the employee reminding and advising him/her of its requirements;
- E) If the employee continues to violate the ordinance, contact your Personnel Analyst.

**15. I supervise several employees who smoke or use electronic smoking devices. How will they**

## manage under the new policy?

Should they choose to do so, employees may use their allotted work breaks to travel off-the property to smoke or use electronic smoking devices. However, employees will not be given additional break time for smoking. Supervisors must be clear with employees on this matter.

### 16. How will you protect individuals who are helping to enforce this policy?

There will be no penalty against anyone seeking to enforce this policy in a courteous and respectful manner. This law is not about smokers. It is about the toxic pollution and fire hazards caused by these products. We are compassionate and nonjudgmental towards those who are addicted and assistance is offered.

### 17. Do I have to quit using tobacco or electronic smoking devices?

No. The law does not require anyone to quit. However, this may be a good time to try to quit. Studies show that most smokers welcome smoke-free environments because it makes quitting the habit much easier to sustain long term.

### 18. If I choose to continue to smoke or use electronic smoking devices during work hours, but I do not have enough time to step off-campus to smoke, what am I supposed to do?

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug and waiting until lunch-time or after work to smoke may be difficult for some. FDA-approved nicotine replacement products such as nicotine gum, nicotine nasal spray, inhalers or lozenges may help some smokers when it is inconvenient to smoke or use electronic smoking devices. Please work with your healthcare provider to determine if these products are appropriate for you.

### 19. This smoke-free law will force staff, patients, visitors and vendors to leave the property to smoke or use electronic smoking devices. What about their personal safety, especially when it is dark?

Everyone is encouraged to be mindful of personal safety while on or off County property. If staff, visitors or contractors need to meet nicotine needs without leaving county property, they should speak with their healthcare provider to discuss medications such as: nicotine patch, gum, lozenges, inhalers or nasal spray.

### 20. What about neighbors next to properties owned or leased by the county?

Please help us maintain a positive relationship with our neighbors that border our properties. People who continue to smoke or use electronic smoking devices during work hours should not litter nor congregate on neighboring property.

**For questions regarding this new law, contact the Marin County Tobacco Related Disease Control Program 415-473-3020 or visit [www.smokefreemarin.com](http://www.smokefreemarin.com).**