

# QUIT@WORK

## Improving Employee Health

Support Your Employees in Quitting Tobacco

### Smoking Affects People and Businesses

While the adult smoking rate has gone down over the last 10 years, nearly 18% of Vermont adults still smoke. And for certain groups – like young adults and lower-income Vermonters – those figures are even higher. Smoking puts people at risk for many diseases such as diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, can worsen chronic conditions like asthma and heart disease, and exposes nonsmokers to secondhand smoke. The result is that over 871<sup>1</sup> Vermonters die each year from tobacco-related diseases, also affecting their families and friends.

Smoking also impacts Vermont's businesses through increased costs. Based on national figures, the following estimates show some of the costs of employee tobacco use:

- **Healthcare Costs** – smokers' healthcare costs are higher than those of nonsmokers: \$2,056 per year, per smoker<sup>2</sup>
- **Smoking breaks** – lost work time, compared to nonsmokers work time: \$3,077 per year, per smoker<sup>2</sup>
- **Absenteeism** – smokers are absent more than nonsmokers and ex-smokers: \$517 per year, per smoker<sup>2</sup>
- **Presenteeism** – smokers show lower on-the-job productivity as a result from nicotine addiction: \$462 per year, per smoker<sup>2</sup>

An overall average cost associated with smoking is approximately \$5,816 per year, per smoker.<sup>2</sup>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOUR BUSINESS? DO THE MATH...

Total employees \_\_\_\_\_ x 18% (VT adult smoking rate) = \_\_\_\_\_ smoking employees (approx.)

Smoking employees \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5,816 = \_\_\_\_\_ the total cost per year to business

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOUR EMPLOYEES?

A pack-a-day smoker in Vermont spends an average of about \$8.12 per day on cigarettes<sup>3</sup>. That adds up to \$246.98 per month and \$2,963.80 per year. For an employee making \$30,000 per year, quitting smoking is like getting an 11% pay increase.

## VERMONT'S SMOKING LAWS

In 2009, Vermont amended its Smoking in the Workplace law to prohibit smoking inside all areas of the workplace. Prior to this amendment the law allowed employees to designate smoking areas if they obeyed certain rules. Now the law requires all indoor areas of workplaces to be 100% smoke-free. In addition, Vermont passed the Clean Indoor Air Act in 1993, which required all enclosed indoor public places to be smoke-free, including restaurants. In 2005, the law was amended to include bars and clubs. (See *Vermont's Smoke-Free Laws* fact sheet or visit [http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/restrictions\\_law.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/restrictions_law.aspx) for more information)

## EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT IS CRITICAL...AND EASY

Employers play an important role in the lives of their employees. While each employer-employee relationship is different, employers have an invaluable opportunity to provide information that can eventually benefit both parties.

This package was created to help employers share information about the range of quitting services and resources that are available to Vermonters who use tobacco or e-cigarettes -- all of which are free of charge.

## Vermont's Quit Tobacco Services – 802Quits

**802Quits** is the range of quitting resources available to Vermonters who use tobacco; including free tools, medication, and personal coaching to quit tobacco. **802Quits** puts tobacco users in control with a choice of proven quit strategies that include our hospital- and community-based **Vermont Quit Partners**, phone coaching through the **Quitline**, and **Quit Online** support and tools.



It has been proven that nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) - patches and gum or lozenges - in combination with counseling support, can double or even triple a smoker's chance of successfully quitting. To help increase Vermonters' chances of success, **802Quits** offers access to free nicotine replacement therapy (while supplies last) to tobacco users using quit coaching. For more information about these services, please visit <http://www.802Quits.org>.

## For More Information

If you would like more information about the Vermont Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program or Vermont's quitting resources, please contact us at 1-802-863-7270 or e-mail [tobaccovt@vermont.gov](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov). For additional resources and information go to <http://802quits.org/>

<sup>1</sup>Vermont 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

<sup>2</sup>Berman M, Crane R, Seiber E, et al. *Tob Control* Published Online First: 24 February 2015 doi: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2012-050888

<sup>3</sup>Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. (2014). *State Excise and Sales Taxes per Pack of Cigarettes: Total Amounts & State Rankings*. Retrieved from <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0202.pdf>.

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## What Can You Do for Your Employees?

There are several simple and easy steps you can take to help employees who use tobacco or e-cigarettes and are ready to quit, or who would like more information. The following is a brief overview of these steps, including tools that are available to your business.

- 1 Workplace Smoking Policy – 100% Smoke-Free**
- 2 Distribute Quitting Resources Information – [802Quits](#)**
- 3 Be Ready When Employees Are Ready to Quit**

### **1 Workplace Smoking Policy**

Vermont law requires all indoor areas of buildings that serve as a workplace to be 100% smoke-free. The law does not require that this information be posted, but employers wishing to do so can order free smoke-free building/property signs by e-mailing [tobaccovt@vermont.gov](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov).

The law does not cover outdoor areas of the workplace (like doorways, near air vents, parking lots, company vehicles, etc.); however, employers may choose to designate these areas as smoke-free. Nor does the current law cover the use of e-cigarettes; however, employers may choose to include e-cigarettes and other vaping devices in their workplace smoking policies.

If you would like to update your policy to include outdoor areas, a sample smoking policy has been provided in this package (“Model Smoke-Free Policy”), along with the *Vermont’s Smoke-Free Laws* fact sheet and other materials to help guide your development.

### **2 Distribute Quitting Resources Information to Employees**

The Vermont Department of Health provides a range of materials about the services and resources available to help tobacco users quit.

#### PRINTED SAMPLES AND OTHER MATERIALS

The following samples are included in this kit and are available in digital format from the **QUIT@WORK** section of our website, at [http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/quit\\_at\\_work.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/quit_at_work.aspx)

- Sample text for company memo, letter, e-mail, newsletter and intranet (“Employee Communications Templates”)



#### IDEAS FOR DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION

- Post information in cafeterias, break areas, bathrooms, etc.
- Post information and links on company resource center
- Include information in company newsletter
- Distribute a memo or send an e-mail to each employee
- Send a personalized letter to each employee's home
- Include information with paychecks
- Hold a company meeting to share information and discuss issues and ideas, or make it part of an existing meeting
- Contact a **Vermont Quit Partner** (located in each hospital in the state) through **802Quits** to present information to managers and/or employees: ([www.802Quits.org/in-person-quit-help/find-a-vermont-quit-partner](http://www.802Quits.org/in-person-quit-help/find-a-vermont-quit-partner))
- Provide quitting resources information and policy to new employees during their orientation
- To order free 802Quits rack cards and Vermont Quit Partner brochures, contact the Vermont Tobacco Control Program by emailing: [tobaccovt@vermont.gov](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov)

#### MORE IDEAS – INCENTIVES AND CONTESTS

In addition to distributing information, some companies offer their employees a little extra motivation and support to quit by using incentives such as:

- Hold a quit tobacco class at your work site – contact your local **Vermont Quit Partner** to set up a group.
- Allow employees to attend local classes during their work hours, without losing pay
- Allow tobacco users to use the **Quitline** phone coaching service or use the **802Quits Quit Online** support during their work hours
- Hold a quit contest with a day or days off for those who quit successfully
- Hold a contest to see who can save the most money by not using tobacco, with a prize for the winner
- Link a quitting contest with the United Way or other charity, and encourage employees to donate all or some of the money saved by quitting; consider an employer match

### 3 Be Ready When Employees Are Ready to Quit

Once you have provided employees with information about the services available to them to quit tobacco, it is important to continue to make that information available. Some of your employees may not be ready to quit right away, but may decide to quit 2 days from now or 2 months from now.

Vermont's tobacco users are trying to quit – more than half of them have made at least one serious quit attempt in the last year<sup>1</sup> – but it often takes many quit attempts before people are able to quit for good. So having information on-hand and easily available year-round can be the key to supporting the quit attempts of employees. Even employees who don't use tobacco may have friends and family members who would find the information helpful.

The following list includes several simple ideas to keep the message alive:

- Provide quitting resources information (and other health information) during yearly employee reviews.
- If employees receive healthcare benefits, provide quitting resources information with insurance premium and benefit updates.
- Schedule a regular time to repost information, like every 3 to 6 months.
- Make sure all new employees get information about quitting resources.

<sup>1</sup> Vermont 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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## Employee Communications Templates

This section includes sample text for creating your own company e-mail, memo, letter, intranet page and a newsletter article. A Word version of this text is available from the **QUIT@WORK** section of our website, at [http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/quit\\_at\\_work.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco/quit_at_work.aspx)

### E-mail/Memo/Letter

Dear employee,

This short **[e-mail/memo/letter]** is about tobacco use in our state and our company. You may not be a tobacco user, but you may know someone who is. About 18% of adults in Vermont smoke, which results in the deaths of over 871 Vermonters each year. It may surprise you to learn that more than half the smokers in Vermont tried to quit at least once in the last year. *But like so many other things, quitting takes practice – most tobacco users find that it takes a few tries to quit for good.*

An outline of the free quitting resources available to Vermonters from the **802Quits** is attached, or you can visit [www.802Quits.org](http://www.802Quits.org). If you don't use tobacco, please pass this on to someone who does.

If you have any questions about this **[e-mail/memo/letter]** or the services available to you, please contact me at **[insert contact information]**.

Sincerely,  
**[insert name]**

### Business Resource Center

About 18% of adults in Vermont smoke, which results in the deaths of over 871 Vermonters each year. It may surprise you to learn that more than half the smokers in Vermont tried to quit at least once in the last year. *But like so many other things, quitting takes practice – most tobacco users find that it takes a few tries to quit for good.*

The Vermont Department of Health offers a range of services to help Vermonters double or even triple their chances of quitting tobacco. If you would like to get ready to quit, find out more about the services or get info for a friend, go to the **802Quits** site at [www.802Quits.org](http://www.802Quits.org).

You can sign up for a call back from a phone coach, find a quitting group in your community, get started with online support from **802Quits**, and find out more about free or reduced cost nicotine replacement therapy (patches and gum or lozenges) to help double your chances of success (while supplies last).

## Employee Communications Templates, continued

### Newsletter

#### Vermont Offers a Range of Options for Tobacco Users Who Want to Quit

Almost 18% of Vermont adults smoke, which means that even if you don't smoke, you probably know someone who does. It may surprise you to learn that more than half of Vermont's smokers have tried to quit at least once over the past year. *But like so many other things, quitting takes practice – most tobacco users find that it takes a few tries to quit for good.*

If you've tried it on your own and want a little help from a coach, would like to get self-help tools or want to log on to an online community of Vermonters like you, check out the following options:

#### Quit By Phone

Call toll free 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for information, quit coaching, and text support.

#### Vermont Quit Partners

Go to [www.802Quits.org/in-person-quit-help/find-a-vermont-quit-partner](http://www.802Quits.org/in-person-quit-help/find-a-vermont-quit-partner) to find your local **Vermont Quit Partner** in your community.

#### Quit Online

Sign up for e-mail reminders and tips, and talk to others about their quitting experiences using Quit Online. Go to the Quit Online section at [www.802Quits.org](http://www.802Quits.org) to get started today!

#### Quit Your Way

For a variety of tools and tips to quit on your own, go to the Your Quit Your Way section of [www.802Quits.org](http://www.802Quits.org).

#### Resources for Pregnant Women

Pregnant or postpartum women can access additional assistance and incentives to quit by enrolling with the Vermont Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669). This tailored protocol includes incentivized participation where women are eligible to receive a \$5 cash card for each completed counseling call during pregnancy (up to \$25), and a \$10 cash card for each call completed postpartum (up to \$40). In addition to incentives, a dedicated quit coach and expanded services are available to support successful tobacco cessation.

#### Free Nicotine Replacement

All Vermonters who receive coaching through 802Quits can access free nicotine replacement therapy – patches and gum or lozenges (while supplies last). Take advantage of these great free services, and remember when it comes to quitting tobacco or e-cigarettes, **You Can Quit, We Can Help!**



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## Setting Your Workplace Smoking Policy

### Ideas for Implementing Policy

- Many businesses find it helpful to involve employees in the process of creating policy, so you may want to ask several employees to create a team to jointly develop and communicate your smoking policy.
- Smokers will be affected the most, so try to get them involved with shaping and communicating the policy. Some businesses have even found “champions” among their smokers.
- Give the process time – employees need time to adjust to change, especially one that may affect their daily routine. You may need 3 to 6 months, or even more, to change your policy.
- Including e-cigarettes and other vaping devices in your Smoke Free Work Site policy is recommended.<sup>1</sup>

### Reasons for a 100% Smoke-free Work Site

- All indoor areas of Vermont worksites are 100% smoke-free (see *Vermont's Smoke-Free Laws* fact sheet for more information).
  - This arrangement complies with all laws and ordinances
  - It reduces exposure to secondhand smoke and thirdhand smoke (chemical residue on objects)
  - Separate ventilation systems do not fully eliminate secondhand smoke
  - Decreases maintenance costs
  - May reduce the number of cigarettes smoked by employees and encourage them to quit
  - Research shows that creating a tobacco-free workplace is one of the most effective things you can do to help employees stop smoking<sup>2</sup>

### Setting Distance from Work Site Buildings

- Vermont law does not designate that smoking take place at a specific distance from public buildings and work sites, but you may choose to include this in your own smoking policy.
- State and many private buildings in Vermont require smoking to be up to 50 feet from the building so that smoke does not reenter the building through entrances or ventilation systems, and so it doesn't affect visitors or nonsmoking employees.
- Many Vermont employers have already created smoke-free outdoor policies (distance from building and/or air-intake vents) and policies for company vehicles.

### For More Information

If you would like additional information about smoking policy or to order smoke free building/property signs, contact the Vermont Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program by emailing [tobaccovt@vermont.gov](mailto:tobaccovt@vermont.gov).

<sup>1</sup>American Public Health Association (APHA). *Supporting regulation of electronic cigarettes*. Policy Statement 20149. 18 November 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2015/01/05/12/58/supporting-regulation-of-electronic-cigarettes>.

<sup>2</sup>National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). HEDIS 2004. Health plan employer data & information set. Vol. 2, Technical specifications. Washington (DC): National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA); 2003. 374p.

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## Model Smoke-Free Policy

It is the policy of **[insert company name]** to provide a smoke-free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product, the use of smokeless or “spit” tobacco, and the use of e-cigarettes or other vaping devices. The policy applies to both employees and non-employee visitors.

### Definition

*Vermont law requires that there will be no smoking of tobacco products within the facilities at any time.*

If smoking occurs outside the building, it must be at least **[insert distance]** feet from the main entrance to ensure that the smoke does not enter the building. All materials used for smoking, including cigarette butts and matches, must be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers.

**(For a smoke-free building and grounds)** *There will be no smoking of tobacco products within the facilities or on the grounds at any time.*

*There will be no smoking in any **[insert company name]** vehicles at any time.*

There will also be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting persons on **[insert company name]**-authorized business, or if the vehicle is parked on company premises.

### Procedure

1. Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs and it will be explained by their host.
2. **[Insert company name]** will help employees who wish to quit tobacco by providing information about Vermont’s quitting resources.
3. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.
4. For questions about *Vermont’s Smoking in the Workplace* law, or to file a complaint with the Department of Health, call (toll-free) 1-866-331-5622.