

Information for Workplaces and Employees

Tobacco smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease, with over 3,400 smoking-related deaths each year in Queensland. Workplaces are well placed to offer health and wellbeing information, resources and programs to support their employees to make positive behaviour changes.

It is estimated that 15.5 per cent of adult Queenslanders smoke daily and that this significantly increases, almost doubling, for some high-risk occupational groups.

Tobacco smoking in the workplace impacts workplace productivity and workers' health and wellbeing – both for smokers and non-smokers.

Passive smoking

Passive smoking is a proven hazard – there is no safe level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals and almost 70 of these are known to cause cancer. Non-smokers with long term exposure to tobacco smoke have up to a 20 per cent higher risk of developing lung cancer when compared to non-smokers who have not been exposed. The more time non-smokers spend exposed to tobacco smoke, the higher the risk to their overall health.

Under occupational health and safety legislation, employers have a duty of care to provide a working environment free of hazards such as environmental tobacco smoke.

Most indoor and many outdoor public places are now smoke-free by law. For more information on

the Queensland tobacco laws visit www.health.qld.gov.au/tobaccolaws

Smoke-free: Benefits for workplaces and employees

A range of health promoting activities to reduce the impact of tobacco smoking can be implemented in the workplace at low or no cost.

Benefits of a healthy workplace and healthy workers include increased safety, productivity and relationships, reduced staff turnover, reduced absenteeism, improved morale and job satisfaction, reduced health care and insurance costs, and longer term benefits of improved general wellbeing, reduced disability, disease and premature death.

Key benefits:

Increased productivity – Research shows that tobacco smoking results in direct production losses in the paid workforce, including workforce absenteeism and on-the-job productivity. In 2004/05 tobacco accounted for 60% or \$8 billion in losses in Australia.¹

Improved health outcomes for workers – Quitting smoking at any age results in both short and long term health benefits such as improved fitness and activity and reduced risk of chronic diseases and cancers. Reducing the portion of the workforce who smoke also reduces non-smokers' exposure to passive smoking.

Ready to quit smoking?



Any time. Any day. We're here to help.

What can workplaces do?

There are many things an employer can do to create a supportive smoke-free work environment. A workplace policy should support workers to adopt healthier behaviors. The policy can include the provision of quit information, and resources and support programs to help employees quit smoking and remain smoke-free. It should also include requirements that create and enforce a smoke-free work environment.

Supportive environments

Under Queensland's tobacco laws many public places are now smoke-free. These include enclosed public places, within four meters of most non-residential building entrances, and all outdoor eating or drinking places where food is provided from an onsite food service (such as a cafeteria). Vehicles used for business purposes when more than one person is in the vehicle must also be smoke-free.

These laws mean that almost all workplaces in Queensland are already required to be largely smoke-free. Employers are encouraged to put processes in place to ensure their employees comply with smoke-free laws and to implement a comprehensive smoke-free workplace policy which helps create physical environments and a culture that supports non-smoking and those who wish to quit.

Information about how to develop and implement a workplace smoke-free policy is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/atod

Quit smoking support

There are many quit support options and methods that give people who smoke the best chance of quitting successfully.

Quitline 13 QUIT

Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848) is a confidential telephone service dedicated to helping people who want to quit smoking.

Quitline is available 7 days a week for the cost of a local call (higher costs for mobile phones). Quitline has been helping smokers to quit for many years, and it also provides information and advice to people not ready to quit smoking.

Trained Quitline counsellors:

- provide information and advice about quitting including the provision of self-help booklets
- assess a smoker's level of nicotine dependence
- help develop strategies to prepare to quit such as a quit plan and quit date
- determine habits and routines around smoking
- discuss motivations for and barriers to quitting
- provide advice on medications to help with quitting
- offer support about staying a non-smoker such as providing tips for managing cravings.

For employees interested in quitting, or for information and resources, contact Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 7848).

Health professionals and pharmacotherapy

Doctors, pharmacists and other health professionals can offer assistance and support to quit smoking and offer advice about the range of smoking cessation products available. Smoking cessation products are particularly useful for people who have had difficulty quitting in the past.

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Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products include patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers and sublingual tablets. These products work by slowly releasing nicotine, which helps placate cravings and ease other withdrawal symptoms, without exposing the person to harmful tobacco smoke. NRT does not contain the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke such as tar, carbon monoxide and other cancer-causing agents.

Non-nicotine medications such as Varenicline (commonly known as Champix) and Bupropion Hcl are also available on prescription from a doctor.

Nicotine replacement therapy and medications including Varenicline and Bupropion Hcl are available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) by prescription from a doctor.

Information and resources

Quit smoking resources

Quit information resources are available free-of-charge. These resources provide information about tobacco smoking, benefits of quitting, quit methods and support services available to assist people wanting to quit.

To order quit resources, visit

www.health.qld.gov.au/quitsmoking

Quitline 13 QUIT

The Quitline is available to support all Queenslanders wanting help with quitting smoking. To promote the Quitline within your workplace, or for further information about how the Quitline can assist, call 13 QUIT (13 7848) or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/quitsmoking. Resources are available for order online, free-of-charge.

Online resources

The following websites provide information and resources about tobacco smoking and quitting:

www.quitnow.gov.au

www.quitbecauseyoucan.org.au

www.health.qld.gov.au/quitsmoking

www.cancerqld.org.au

www.quitcoach.org.au

www.icanquit.com.au

www.13quit.org.au

www.quit.org.au

1. Collins D, Lapsley HM. *The Costs of Tobacco, Alcohol and Illicit Drug Abuse to Australian Society in 2004/05*. Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra; 2008.