

# SMOKE-FREE CONTRA COSTA



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors adopted this law June 3, 2014 to improve the health and safety of people visiting and working at county facilities. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and 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.

### 2. Where is smoking prohibited?

- In all buildings, vehicles, and other enclosed areas occupied by county employees, owned or leased by the county, or otherwise operated by the county.
- All outdoor areas owned or leased by the county, including parking lots (including inside personal vehicles in parking lots), the grounds of the county's hospital and health clinics, and the grounds of all other buildings owned or leased by the county.

For a complete list of properties included under this ordinance, please go [smokefreecc.org](http://smokefreecc.org) or call 888-877-4202.

### 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?

Contra Costa Regional Medical Center and health center campuses have been 100% smoke-free under the county law since 2006, and electronic smoking devices were prohibited in 2013. All other properties owned or leased by the county will become 100% smoke-free on March 1, 2015.



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**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 Contra Costa County, including employees, patients, visitors, vendors, and subcontractors.

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

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) 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. FDA-approved smoking cessation aids, such as nicotine gum and patches, are not prohibited by this law.

**7. Where can I smoke or use electronic smoking devices?**

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.

**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, patients 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. For a complete list of properties included under this ordinance, please go [smokefreecc.org](http://smokefreecc.org) or call 888-877-4202.

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

No. Shelters and ash canisters in existing smoking areas will be removed by March 1, 2015.

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

This law is designed to be enforced through signage and education. However, staff who violate 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 Contra Costa 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. You may also hand them a "Smoke-free Policy Reminder Card" (to order cards, email [tobaccopreventionproject@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:tobaccopreventionproject@hsd.cccounty.us) or call 888-877-4202). The cards will serve as a tool for individuals to notify smokers who are not familiar or in compliance with the policy.
- Individuals may also choose to engage Sheriff's deputies on the premises to address the situation as appropriate.

**13. 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.

**14. 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.

**15. What resources are available to help me stop smoking?**

If you would like support quitting tobacco or electronic smoking devices, go to [www.cchealth.org/tobacco/time-to-quit-smoking.php](http://www.cchealth.org/tobacco/time-to-quit-smoking.php) for a list of local cessation resources.

In addition, California has a free helpline that offers ongoing one-on-one counseling and cessation materials in several languages.

English speakers	1 -800- NO- BUTTS (1-800-662-8887)
Spanish speakers	1-800-45-NO-FUME (1-800-456-6386)
Mandarin and Cantonese	1-800-838-8917
Vietnamese	1-800-778-8440
Korean	1-800-556-5564
TDD/TYY	1-800-933-4TDD (1-800-933-4833)

**16. 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 gum 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.

**17. 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 their personal safety while on or off County property. If staff, patients, visitors or contractors need to meet nicotine needs without leaving county property they should speak with their healthcare provider to discuss medications such as the nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray or inhaler.

**18. 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.

**19. Don't I have a right to smoke or use electronic smoking devices on properties owned or leased by the County?**

Using tobacco and electronic smoking devices is a personal choice, not a legally protected right. In addition, prohibiting smoking and use of electronic smoking devices in buildings and vehicles and on properties owned or leased by the county preserves everyone's right to breathe clean, smoke-free air, while allowing adults who smoke to continue to do so off the premises. This decision supports the rights and privileges of both smokers and non-smokers alike.

**20. Do smoke free policies really help?**

Yes! According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, smoking bans and restrictions lead to a reduction in the amount of daily smoking among employees and an increase in the number of individuals who stop smoking. Smoke-free properties and workplaces also reduce the risk of non-smokers developing heart disease and lung cancer due to secondhand smoke exposure.

**21. Whom do I contact if I have additional questions about the law?**

For comments or questions regarding this law, contact the Tobacco Prevention Project at [tobaccopreventionproject@hsd.cccounty.us](mailto:tobaccopreventionproject@hsd.cccounty.us), 1-888-877-4202 or visit [SmokeFreeCC.org](http://SmokeFreeCC.org).



SmokeFreeCC.org