

Sonoma County No-Smoking Ordinance Implementation Guide

This information DOES NOT APPLY to areas within the boundaries of local cities.

Ordinance Timeline:

As of **December 3, 2011**, any area that is within twenty-five (25) feet of operable doors, windows, or vents must be smoke-free in accordance with the ordinance's requirement to prohibit smoking within a "reasonable distance" of an area in which smoking is prohibited. This will help keep second-hand smoke from drifting back into your building and any neighboring businesses. Outdoor drinking/dining areas are exempt from the entryway provision until June 1, 2012. This extended timeline provides those establishments with outdoor/drinking areas additional time to prepare for implementation.

As of **June 1, 2012** – smoking is not allowed in ANY outdoor dining, drinking, or picnic area in unincorporated Sonoma County.

Creating A Smoke-Free Workplace:

Here are a few suggested steps for you to undertake to effectively make your dining area smoke-free. This will ensure the smoothest transition possible for both your employees and your customers.

❖ **Talk to your staff about the new smoke-free outdoor dining law in the unincorporated area of Sonoma County**

- Make sure your employees are aware that health concerns are the reason for the new law. You can tell them there is a concern about the health and safety of those who work for you and that you and the County are concerned about protecting them and your customers from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Also, you know that the customers will be able to enjoy the efforts of the kitchen better without offensive tobacco smells getting in the way.
- Train your employees on what they need to do to enforce the new law – what to say to customers who wish to smoke. Make sure you focus on the new law and the health aspects and benefits of going smoke-free. Do not focus on the smoker.
- Create a written procedure and ask the employees to sign a copy for their file to ensure that there are no opportunities for misunderstandings.
- Have material on hand about cessation classes and support for any of your smoking staff who express an interest in quitting.

❖ **Prepare your property.**

- Make sure you have removed all ashtrays, matches, and other smoking paraphernalia that might encourage smokers to light up in your outdoor eating or drinking area.
- Place any ash cans a minimum of 25 feet away from the main entrance and outdoor dining areas to set the boundaries. Offer gum or mints as an alternative to smoking.
- Post no-smoking signs wherever possible, particularly in places where people tend to smoke: at entrances, on bulletin boards, in waiting areas – ask for employee input on other possible locations. Prominently displaying no-smoking signs will make it obvious that the worksite is smoke-free and will eliminate any potential misunderstandings.

Customer Complaints

The best way to handle customer complaints is to head them off before hand. This can be accomplished by posting "Smoke-Free" or "No-Smoking" signs in highly visible locations and removing all ashtrays or other accommodations for smoking. You may also want to talk to customers about the new law and remind them how much you value their continued business. Focus on the law, not the smoker.

While fears of enforcement are always uppermost in management's mind when a new smoke-free law is enacted, most people are law abiding. Visit www.sonoma-county.org/smokefreeinfo for more information and resources including downloadable no-smoking signs.