Guidelines for Tobacco-Free Workplaces

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Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP)

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Definitions

- o **Tobacco Products:** products that are made up, either partly or wholly, of tobacco leaves as a raw material in any form whatsoever, whether in their natural state, or mixed with other materials, or processed into liquid, vapor or powder.

- o **Tobacco Use:** includes any means of tobacco use, whether by smoking, inhaling, chewing, vaporization, absorption or any other means that introduces tobacco components into the human body.

- o **Public Place:** a place designed to accommodate the public or a specific group of people for any purpose.

- o **Passive/Indirect/ Involuntary Smoking:** refers to inhalation of the smoke released by smokers using any type of tobacco products, whether cigarettes, shisha (water pipes), or electronic products, where there is no safe level of involuntary tobacco smoke.

- o **Workplaces:** according to Article 8 of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, workplaces are defined as any place used by people in performing their work or job. The definition of workplaces is not limited only to the place where work is performed but extends to all the places associated with the same that are used together by employees or workers in performing their work, e.g. corridors, elevators, lobbies, waiting rooms, toilets, and means of transport of the facility.

Introduction

Smoking, in all its forms and methods is considered as one of most important risk factors for non-communicable (chronic) diseases. Recent years have seen a surge in the incidence rates of serious diseases associated with tobacco use and passive (involuntary) smoking. Additionally, there has been an alarming rise in annual mortality rates due to smoking-related diseases, particularly in developing countries that constitute major consumers of tobacco products worldwide.

Faced with the challenges of the increasing number of smokers, the exposure of non-smokers to the harms of passive smoking, and the targeted marketing by tobacco companies to youth and young adult from men and women to grow up this generation this generation under the influence of smoking, MOHAP is dedicating significant attention to the fight against smoking. This commitment stems from a profound concern for the health of citizens and a steadfast belief that the good health of future generations begins today by protecting them from the detrimental effects of smoking.

In line with this, the UAE ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2005. The WHO FCTC is the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organization. It was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2003 and entered into force in February 2005. It has since become one of the most widely embraced treaties in the history of the United Nations, with the majority of countries worldwide ratifying it.

The WHO FCTC has established the minimum measures that countries must take to combat the Tobacco Use. Article 8 of the WHO FCTC requires signatory parties to adopt and implement effective legislative, executive, and administrative measures to protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, and other public places.

In 2009, Federal Law No. 15 on Tobacco Control was issued, followed by the bylaw by Cabinet Resolution No. 24 of 2013. This Law regulates all tobacco-related activities. Articles 7 & 8 of the Law prohibit smoking in closed public places, and Article 11 of the bylaw also prohibits the use of any form of tobacco in all public places, including governmental, health, educational institutions, modes of public transport, and other public places.

What Does a Tobacco-free Facility Mean?

- It is a facility that prohibits the Tobacco Use, in all its forms, means and types (as mentioned in the definitions contained at the beginning of these Guidelines). This includes all the borders of the facility campus, without any exceptions.
- It is a facility that helps workers who use tobacco stop smoking.
- It is a facility where no tobacco product is sold.
- It is a facility that prohibits advertisements of tobacco consumption or promotion.

Why Tobacco-free Workplaces?

Tobacco-free workplaces help protect the public health by enhancing the quality of healthy life in the work environment, taking into account the following points:

I.

- Smoking is the primary cause of death that can be avoided simply by quitting.
- Lowering the rates of morbidity and mortality associated with tobacco use.
- Preserving the individual's health and boosting his productivity.
- Preserving the air quality in workplaces.
- Contributing to the development and sustainability and preserving human resources.

II.

- Prohibiting smoking in government facilities and workplaces is a commitment to safeguarding the health of employees and visitors in those facilities, and supports the achievement of the UAE's Vision 2031.

III.

- The smoke-free environment in government facilities and workplaces draws the attention of employees and visitors to the health hazards associated with smoking.
- Smoke-free government facilities and workplaces encourage smokers among employees, visitors, and all members of the community to:
  - ✓ Reduce tobacco consumption.
  - ✓ Make the decision to quit tobacco.
  - ✓ Support the tobacco quitting.

IV.

Smoke-free government facilities and workplaces create a healthy and safe workplace with evident economic returns, as manifested by:

- Increased productivity of employees as it reduces the absenteeism rates resulting from smoking-related illnesses, and minimizes employees' preoccupation with smoking, allowing them to concentrate more on accomplishing the required tasks.
- Lowered maintenance costs.
- Reduced incidence of fires.

V.

Prohibiting smoking in government facilities and workplaces is a commitment to enforcing the law, which strictly prohibits smoking within these facilities.

How to Implement the Guidelines for Tobacco-Free Workplaces

If you are a manager of or responsible for a facility, you have the responsibility for enforcing the law and taking effective measures to prevent smoking and monitoring compliance to ensure the ongoing implementation. The following measures are key to ensuring that a facility is tobacco-free:

- Making the implementation of tobacco-free policy initiative an integral part of the Professional Performance Document/Work Environment Quality Policy.
- Raising awareness among all facility's employees, visitors, and clients that this (facility/organization) has become smoke-free, **and smoking is not allowed anywhere in the (facility/organization), including outdoor areas and parking area.**
- **For a facility to be tobacco-free, we recommend developing and implementing written procedures to prevent the Tobacco Use in the facility. These procedures should be concise and straightforward, covering the following points:**
  - o Nomination of management and staff members responsible for overseeing the implementation of these procedures.
  - o Raising awareness among employees about tobacco free environment.
  - o Provision of essential information to employees to help them quit smoking.
  - o Communication of the procedures to all the facility's employees, asking them to sign confirming of the same.
  - o Setting of the measures to be followed in case of non-compliance with the communicated procedures.

In case of deliberate violation of the smoking prohibition procedures within the facility while being aware of them, disciplinary actions must be taken against the violating party, in accordance with the regulations applied by the facility or organization.

Procedures of Implementing the Guidelines for Tobacco-Free Workplaces

- ☐ Placing a board displaying the smoking prohibition measures in a prominent place at the facility entrances.
- ☐ Strictly prohibiting smoking across the facility without any exceptions, especially in indoor or closed places, as well as the facility vehicles. Smoking must not be allowed in any part of the facility, including outdoor and parking areas. There must be no designated smoking rooms within the facility.
- ☐ Removing all cigarette receptacles.
- ☐ Applying the procedures to everyone present in the facility without any exceptions, including all managers, employees, workers, contractors, experts, consultants, suppliers, visitors, and anyone present in the facility without any exceptions.
- ☐ Placing an adequate number of no smoking signs in prominent places across the facility. The signs must indicate the smoking prohibition and the associated penalties.
- ☐ It is imperative to place no smoking signs across the smoke-free facility, including all closed places, waiting rooms, corridors, elevators, and other areas, where smokers are likely to use.
- ☐ Criteria of no smoking signs in workplaces:

- The sign must meet the following minimum requirements:
- It should be at least 148mm × 210mm (A5 size).
- The international no smoking sign must be displayed in a space not less than 7cm in diameter.
- The sign must clearly display the following sentence in an easy-to-read way: (No Smoking / Smoking in this area holds you legally accountable / Smoking in this area is against the law and may subject you to a financial fine.)

No Smoking

Smoking in this area is against the law

and may subject you to a financial fine

☐ Selling, promoting, or advertising any Tobacco Products within the facility must be prohibited. Additionally, tools, whether functional or office-related, bearing the logo or colors of any tobacco manufacturer must not be allowed.

☐ The engagement of companies related to the tobacco industry or trade must not be allowed, whether through funding educational grants and scientific research, sponsoring sports tournaments, cultural seminars, entertainment events, or any form of moral support provided to the facility or its employees.

☐ There must be a method or channel to file complaints, make questions, give feedback and opinions, or report violations, as well as each and every matter related to the smoking prohibition procedures.

How to Deal with a Smoker in a Tobacco-free Facility

Based on the experience and insights gained from several countries that have implemented smoke free policies in public places, there is widespread public acceptance of the laws of anti-smoking and protection of non-smokers from exposure to tobacco smoke. Nevertheless, the facility's manager must take appropriate action in case of non-compliance.

Below we will clarify how to deal with smokers in a facility implementing the smoke free policy:

1. Draw the smoker's attention verbally and ask him to stop smoking.
2. Written notification of the smoker that smoking constitutes a violation that holds them accountable under the Tobacco Control Law.
3. If the smoker refuses to stop smoking, the following actions may be taken:

If the smoker is an (employee)	If the smoker is a (client or visitor)
Remind them that the no-smoking policy aims to protect employees and visitors from exposure to the harmful effects of smoking.	Tell them that that the facility's staff will not provide any services to them if they continue smoking, and will ask them to leave the building.
If they refuse to comply with the procedures, disciplinary actions must be taken against those violating the facility smoking prohibition procedures.	If they do not leave the building, actions normally taken by the facility in respect of illegal behaviors must apply.

There must be a record documenting the violating person's name and the incident location, timing, and consequences.

Appendix 1 – Form of Smoking Prohibition Procedures

Facility Name:

Title	Smoking Prohibition Procedures	Issue Date	--.--.2023
Implementation Officer		**Review Date**	--.--.2025

Goal: protecting the public health by enhancing the quality of healthy life in the work environment, through:

- Protecting the facility's employees, workers, visitors, and clients from exposure to the harms of direct and indirect smoking.
- Encouraging the facility's employees and workers to quit smoking.

Target Groups:

- All the facility's workers and visitors, as well as those benefiting from the services provided by the facility.

Covered Area:

- All parts of the facility, including all buildings, corridors, elevators, toilets, dining areas, and any building annexes, as well as transport means owned by the facility.

Procedures:

- Communicating smoking prohibition procedures across the facility and training all employees on them.
- Strictly prohibiting smoking within the facility without any exceptions.
- Placing adequate no smoking signs, informational and guiding media in prominent places throughout the facility.
- Raising awareness among all employees and visitors about the importance of adhering to and supporting the no-smoking policy.
- Removing all cigarette receptacles from the facility.
- Prohibiting the sale or promotion of any Tobacco Products.
- Specifying a method or channel for reporting violations of smoking prohibition procedures.
- Identifying smoking employees and providing them with the necessary services to quit smoking.
- Encouraging people to quit smoking and organizing awareness-raising events about the smoking-associated hazards.
- Periodic evaluation of the implementing procedures and their impact.
- Setting the penalties, whether administrative or otherwise, that are to be applied to the violants. (***To be mentioned in detail***).

Implementation Officer   Facility Manager
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Appendix 2 – Smoking-free Facility Assessment Form

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		Entrance	Reception	Waiting Rooms	Stairs & Corridors	Elevators	Dining Areas	Administrative Offices
1	Is the "No Smoking" sign visible, clear and not damaged?							
2	Do the no smoking signs warn of the violation and penalty?							
3	Are there informational materials about the smoking prohibition, brochures, …?							
4	Are the smoking prohibition procedures communicated and disseminated across the facility?							
5	Are there any advertisements or commercials about the Tobacco Products?							
6	Is there a list of the smoking employees wishing to quit smoking?							
7	Are there any functional tools that bear the logo of a tobacco company?							
8	Are there cigarette receptacles?							
9	Is there any smell of smoke in the place?							
10	Are they any smoking traces on the floors?							
11	Have you seen anyone smoking in the facility?							
12	Are the smoking employees informed of the smoking quitting services?							

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Appendix 3 – UAE's Smoking Rates

In 2013, the United Arab Emirates conducted the Global Youth Tobacco Survey to measures the tobacco consumption rates among young people aged (13-15), through a field study that covered approximately 4,500 male and female students in this age group. The study used a questionnaire covering various smoking-related topics, such as tobacco types, passive smoking, smoking quitting, the impact of advertising, and more. According to the results:

- 16.4% of boys and 8.3% of girls use a Tobacco Product at that moment.
- 9.7% of boys and 2.7% of girls smoke cigarettes at that moment.
- 5.6% of boys and 4.4% of girls use smokeless tobacco at that moment.

Rates of smoking different tobacco types among males and females

as revealed by the results of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey
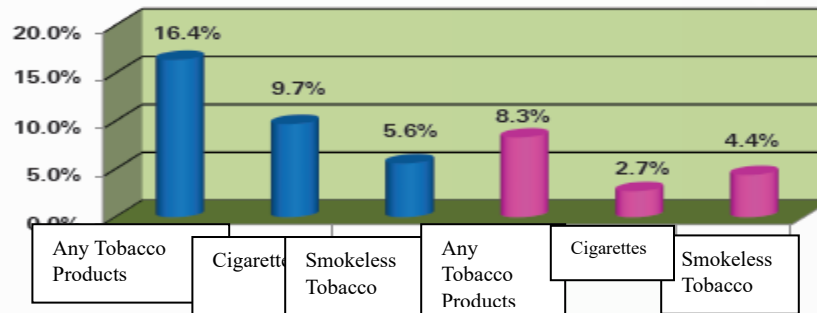
As for the exposure to the passive smoking, the study revealed the following:

- 25% of the total sample included in the study reported being exposed to tobacco smoke at home.
- 47% of the total sample included in the study reported being exposed to tobacco smoke in closed public places.
-

Rates of exposure to passive smoking
as revealed by the results of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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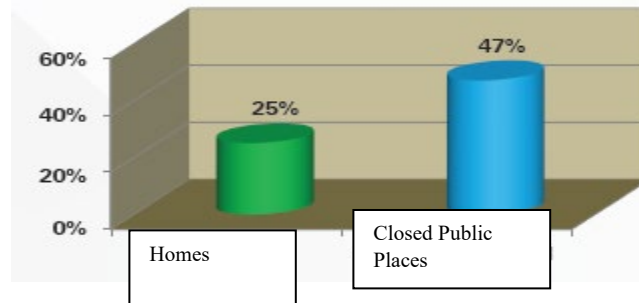
In 2018, the National Health Survey, which covered various aspects of public health and health behaviors, including the patterns of Tobacco Use, smoking, and smoking quitting, showed the following rates of smoking among adults:

- Approximately 15.7% of adult males use a form of tobacco at that moment.
- Approximately 2.4% of adult females use a form of tobacco at that moment.
- The overall rate between both genders is 9.1% at that moment.

	Male	Female	Total
Rate of those who use any Tobacco Product at the moment	15.7%	2.4%	9.1%
Rate of those who use any Tobacco Product at the moment (on a daily basis)	13.9%	2.0%	8.0%

Appendix 4 – Passive/Indirect/Involuntary Smoking

"There is no safe level of indirect tobacco smoke."

Indirect tobacco smoke is the smoke that fills restaurants, offices, or other closed places when people burn Tobacco Products, such as cigarettes, midwakh (elongated pipe), and shisha (water pipes). Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 toxic chemicals, including at least 250 identified as harmful and 50 as carcinogens.

Scientific studies and research have demonstrated that exposure to passive smoking increases the risk of critical conditions, such as coronary artery disease, angina pectoris, asthma attacks, lung cancer, sudden infant death syndrome, and respiratory diseases in childhood. Emissions from any form of tobacco smoking or heating pose a health risk to individuals surrounding the smoker, as particles of heavy metals persist in the air for long periods.

Many assume that proper ventilation can eliminate the health risks associated with passive smoking, but scientific evidence confirms that ventilation systems only remove the smell and visible aspects of smoke, not the toxic substances causing cancer. Since there is no safe level of exposure to indirect tobacco smoke, ventilation systems are not an acceptable choice, and designating a room, space or closed place for smoking is, therefore, against the law. As such, the only way to provide effective protection against passive smoking exposure consists, in the first place, in preventing people from inhaling indirect smoke.

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☐ Guidelines of Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), available on:
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☐ WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008 "Set of Six Policies", available on:
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☐ Federal Law 9/2009 on Tobacco Control

☐ The Bylaw of the Federal Law on Tobacco Control, issued by the Cabinet's Resolution 24/2013.

☐ Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2013, available on:
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☐ National Health Survey 2018, available on:
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☐ WHO's Guidelines of Protection from Exposure to Second-hand Tobacco Smoke. Policy Recommendations, available on:
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☐ Guidelines of the UK Smoke-free Law, available on:
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☐ Guidelines on Smoking Prohibition in Workplaces in the KSA, available on:
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