

Tobacco Reduction

How can local governments decrease the harmful impact of tobacco use in communities?



This Action Guide supports British Columbia's local governments in their efforts to build healthier communities for all. It shares promising practices and examples of how local governments can create conditions that support healthy and thriving communities.

Actions can include implementing bylaw and policy changes, and supporting programs and partnerships with community stakeholders. The specific actions recommended below are compiled from both evidence-based best practice and promising innovations that are showing results in Canadian communities.



Healthy People



Healthy Society



Healthy Environments

Tobacco Reduction In BC

How does tobacco use affect British Columbians and what steps have been taken to reduce the use of tobacco?

The majority of British Columbians are non-smokers: 85% of BC residents do not smoke.¹ However, tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death and disease in Canada. It kills approximately 6,000² British Columbians each year, despite BC having the lowest smoking rate in Canada.³ Exposure to second-hand smoke causes at least 1,000 deaths per year in Canada from lung cancer and heart disease.⁴ Second-hand smoke is the single largest source of indoor air pollution and contains a mixture of nearly 4,000 chemicals—more than 50 of which are carcinogens (cancer-causing agents).⁵ Reducing the number of people who smoke has positive health, social, environmental, and financial implications.

Though fewer youth are smoking, too many are still starting. One of the most effective ways to keep children and youth from starting to smoke is to provide them with smoke-free environments where they live, play, and go to school. Smoking is banned in most indoor public spaces and

private workspaces, and within 3 metres of public doorways, open windows, and air intakes – a smoke-free buffer zone. All tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco, is banned in all kindergarten to Grade 12 public and private schools and on school grounds (unless it is being used in an approved Aboriginal ceremonial context).⁶ Moreover, tobacco cannot be promoted in stores where youth have access.

The majority of smokers want to quit and many are looking for helpful tools. Support is available 24 hours a day through QuitNow Services and the BC Smoking Cessation Program. While many programs have successfully reduced smoking rates, it remains important to protect all people from second-hand smoke. **Demand is on the rise for smoke-free outdoor public spaces and smoke-free housing options.**

Local governments play an important role in protecting the health of all citizens by taking actions that reduce the harmful impact of tobacco use in communities. Bylaws, policies, programs, and partnerships—such as with Health Authorities—can help to ensure youth do not start to smoke, assist smokers to quit, and protect people from exposure to second-hand smoke.

“ One of the most effective ways to keep children and youth from starting to smoke is to provide them with smoke-free environments where they live, play, and go to school. ”



Actions Local Governments Can Take

What can local governments do to reduce the uptake of tobacco use in communities, help smokers quit, and prevent exposure to second-hand smoke?



Bylaws

While the Tobacco Control Act sets a provincial baseline for protection from second-hand smoke, many local governments in BC have provided greater protection through smoke-free bylaws. Local governments can expand the level of bylaw protection as community readiness and support increases. Specifically, local governments can:

Implement no-smoking bylaws by prohibiting smoking:

- on restaurant and pub patios
- in outdoor public places where people gather
- in parks and on trails
- on local government properties, both the grounds and buildings
- in health care and post-secondary institution sites

Support all no-smoking bylaws with appropriate levels of signage, education and enforcement.

Increase buffer zones beyond the provincial level of 3 metres.

Policies

There are a number of policies that local governments can establish to help reduce the impact of tobacco.

Support smoke-free outdoor places. Local governments can raise awareness of local smoke-free campaigns and bylaws that discourage people from smoking in places like playgrounds and sports fields by using signage and providing education programs for sports organizations and the broader community.

Support more smoke-free housing options. The majority of British Columbians are looking for more opportunities for smoke-free living.⁷ The home is one of the last remaining indoor places where people are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke. Local governments can promote smoke-free homes in the building approval process for both private- and public-sector housing, giving consideration to the housing security of vulnerable people who continue to be addicted to tobacco. Smoke-free secondary suites in smoke-free houses can also be encouraged.

Ensure new local government buildings meet LEED smoke-free requirements.

Ensure most new public-sector housing is smoke free (especially complexes that house children), in jurisdictions that have this responsibility.

Actions Local Governments Can Take



Programs

Raising awareness about the benefits of reducing tobacco use helps build community support. Specifically, local governments can:

Begin a public education plan to build support for smoke-free public places, including smoke-free parks, playgrounds, and playing fields, by posting signs to raise awareness of the community smoke-free bylaw at sites where children and youth play.

Have key community leaders comment in the media in support of smoke-free programs that protect youth.

Have fire departments educate on the fire dangers of cigarette use in the home and in outdoor areas like parks.

Discuss the environmental impact of tobacco litter in public spaces and **ensure safe disposal options** are available.

Host smoking cessation programs at community centres.

Support employees to quit smoking and foster a healthy smoke-free workplace.

Work with retailers to ensure they are not selling tobacco to youth, especially stores that may have a high percentage of youth as customers.



Partnerships

A broad-based community coalition will increase the success of local government tobacco restrictions. Health Authority staff, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses and others can be involved in building the case for tobacco reduction initiatives and be early adopters and validators of new local government policies. Specifically, local governments can:

Work with Health Authorities to coordinate bylaws, policies, and programs. Health Authority staff are experienced in all aspects of tobacco control.

Work with non-profit and community-based organizations with strong ties to the community. They can help support tobacco reduction and smoke-free policies.

Work with community partners to promote smoke-free public events.



Checklist

The following checklist can help assess the ways that tobacco reduction is supported in the community and provide insight into next steps. How many boxes can be checked off for your local government?

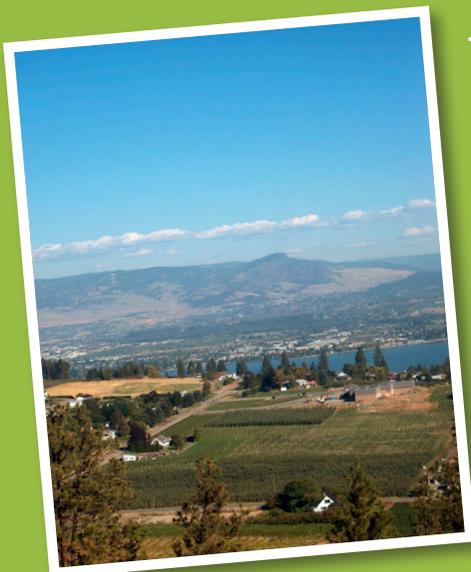


Does your organization:

- Support smoke-free outdoor spaces through bylaws, education, and signage?
- Support residents and housing providers to institute smoke-free housing policies and increase the inventory of smoke-free homes?
- Support awareness campaigns and social marketing strategies that discourage tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke?
- Promote programs and services (such as QuitNow Services and the BC Smoking Cessation Program) to help smokers quit smoking?
- Support employees to access tobacco cessation resources or other healthy living information?
- Have strategies in place to address the environmental impact of tobacco litter in public spaces?

Case Study City of Kelowna

What are other local governments doing to reduce tobacco use?



The City of Kelowna implemented a Parks and Public Spaces Bylaw in February 2011 that prohibits smoking in all Kelowna parks, including beaches, trails, playgrounds, sports fields, and stadiums.

The adoption of the bylaw ensures healthy, smoke-free air for park users, reduces risk of fires, reduces toxins in the soil and water, and reduces smoking-related litter. The move was supported by the Interior Health Authority, the Canadian Cancer Society BC and Yukon Division, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and the BC Lung Association.

Updating the bylaw to make parks smoke free enabled Kelowna to join a growing list of local governments in British Columbia that eliminate or restrict smoking in parks and on beaches. Parks and beaches in neighbouring West Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan are also smoke free.

Resources

Clean Air Coalition

A Step by Step Primer for Local Governments to Implement Tobacco-Free Outdoor Places
<http://www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com/issues/smoke-free-outdoor-public-places>

Smoke-Free Municipal Bylaws Exceeding Provincial Standards

A listing provided by the Clean Air Coalition)
<http://www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com/issues/smoke-free-outdoor-public-places/smoke-free-legislation>

QuitNow

Telephone, web, or text support to help smokers quit list of local support services
<http://www.quitnow.ca/tools-and-resources/local-help-directory.php>

Smoke-Free Housing BC

Online resource for tenants, landlords, and strata councils to promote smoke-free living
<http://www.smokefreehousingbc.ca>

WellnessFits

Free workplace wellness program that offers employers the resources and support they need to create a tobacco-free workplace
<https://www.wellnessfits.ca/>

BC Ministry of Health's Tobacco Control Program

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/quitting-smoking-tobacco-use/tobacco-control-program/>

BC Smoking Cessation Program

The Province of BC's Smoking Cessation Program helps individuals to stop smoking or using other tobacco products by assisting with the cost of smoking cessation aids
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/pharmacare-for-bc-residents/what-we-cover/drug-coverage/bc-smoking-cessation-program>

References

1. Canadian Community Health Survey 2013/2014 Combined Sample, (accessed May, 2016).
2. Selected Vital Statistics and Health Status Indicators, Annual Report 2011, Table 42, Vital Statistics Agency .
3. Canadian Community Health Survey 2013/2014 Combined Sample. (accessed May, 2016)
4. Health Canada, "Health Concerns: Smoke-free Public Spaces," 2011, (accessed May, 2016).
5. World Health Organization, "Only 100% smoke-free environments adequately protect from dangers of second-hand smoke," news release, May 29, 2007, (accessed May, 2016).
6. Tobacco Control Act, RSBC 1996, c.451, s.2.2. (accessed May, 2016).
7. "Report from National Forum on Drifting Second-Hand Smoke in Multi-Unit Dwellings", Toronto 20-21 March 2007. (accessed May, 2016).

More Information

Want support or to learn more about improving the health of your community?

Health authorities can support local governments by providing advice and expertise on health, acting as a resource for local government staff and elected officials to develop healthy public policy, providing community health profiles, and facilitating opportunities and partnerships to work together on joint healthy living actions.

You might already have relationships with your health authority. If not, the contacts below are a good place to start:

Please Contact:

Health Authorities

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