

**VENTURA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE SMOKE-FREE ORDINANCE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S) FOR VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

1. Why is the County of Ventura going smoke-free?

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted the Ventura County Comprehensive Smoke-free Ordinance on January 10, 2017 to improve the health and safety of people visiting and working in county facilities and unincorporated Ventura County. Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the United States and the U.S. Surgeon General has stated that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

2. When does this ordinance become effective?

The ordinance became effective on February 10, 2017. Enforcement of the ordinance will begin on August 10, 2017.

3. To whom does this ordinance apply?

This ordinance applies to all County employees, contractors and vendors doing business with the County and; clients and visitors accessing services in county facilities.

4. Where is smoking prohibited?

Smoking is prohibited in all buildings, vehicles, and other enclosed areas occupied by County employees, and owned, operated or leased by the county.

Smoking is also prohibited in all unenclosed areas of property owned or leased by the County, including parking lots (this includes inside personal vehicles in parking lots), and the grounds of county owned or leased buildings, except in designated smoking area.

5. How will the ordinance be enforced?

An awareness campaign will be launched using signage and educational materials to County employees and to the public. As this is a County ordinance, enforcement of the ordinance is at the sole discretion of the County, but repeat violations are infractions subject to a fine.

Each incident of smoking or use of a tobacco product in violation of this chapter is an infraction subject to a warning for a first violation and then punishable by a fine of \$50 for a second violation within one year, a fine of \$100 for a third violation within one year, and a fine of \$200 for a fourth or subsequent violation.

6. What is the definition of “smoking” and therefore prohibited by this ordinance?

Smoking includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, water pipes, pipes, hookahs, marijuana (including medical marijuana) and electronic smoking devices, such as e-cigarettes and vaping pens, which produce a vapor of nicotine or other substances.

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7. As a County employee, can I smoke in my personal vehicle?

Smoking or the use of electronic smoking devices is not permitted in an employee's personal vehicle, whether parked or in motion, if it is located on property owned or leased by the County.

8. Are there designated smoking areas on properties owned or leased by the County?

There will be one designated smoking area located at the Ventura County Government Center in order to enable prospective jurors who smoke to remain within vicinity of the jury services room while waiting to be called into a courtroom. There are no other designated smoking areas on County property at this time.

9. What should employees and managers do if they see someone smoking or using electronic smoking devices on property owned or leased by the county?

County employees are not required to enforce the ordinance in the event they encounter someone smoking, however they are encouraged to educate the public and co-workers.

County managers are expected to support enforcement of the ordinance through education and awareness. Most everyone is respectful of smoke-free laws and will comply when made aware of the ordinance.

10. How should managers/supervisors talk to County employees about the ordinance?

Managers and supervisors should remind their staff of this Comprehensive Smoke-free Ordinance to ensure compliance. They are also encouraged to incorporate the ordinance into their department's administrative policy manual.

11. What should managers and supervisors do if a County employee regularly violates the ordinance?

A face-to-face meeting with an employee to discuss compliance issues is always the best place to start. The following tips can help:

- a) Begin with a verbal reminder of the ordinance;
- b) Emphasize that you don't expect or require the employee to quit smoking, but that the employee must comply with the ordinance while in buildings, vehicles and on properties owned or leased by the County,
- c) If the employee indicates an interest in quitting, direct him or her to Ventura County Public Health's Tobacco Education and Prevention Program and the Call it Quits cessation classes.
- d) In the event a situation arises, consult with your departmental HR representative.

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12. Will reports of violations of the ordinance remain confidential?

Any reports of violations of this ordinance from County employees or the public will be kept confidential. There will be no penalty against anyone seeking to enforce this ordinance in a courteous and respectful manner.

13. What options are available to employees who smoke on their break?

Employees may use their allotted work breaks to travel off the property to smoke or use electronic smoking devices. However, County employees will not be given additional break time to smoke.

14. If a County employee chooses to smoke or use electronic smoking devices during work hours, but they do not have enough time to step off-campus to smoke during their break, what are they supposed to do?

FDA-approved nicotine replacement products such as nicotine patch, gum, nicotine nasal spray, inhalers or lozenges may help some smokers when they cannot smoke or use electronic smoking devices. Employees are encouraged to consult with their healthcare provider to determine if these products are appropriate for them.

15. Do County employees have to quit using tobacco or electronic smoking devices?

The ordinance does not require County employees to quit, but they are encouraged to do so. Studies show that most smokers welcome smoke-free environments because it makes quitting the habit much easier to sustain long term.

16. What resources are available to help employee's stop smoking?

If County employees would like support to quit the use of tobacco and tobacco products they can call Ventura County Public Health Tobacco Education and Prevention's **Call it Quits** program at (805) 201-7867 or visit <http://www.vchca.org/ventura-county-public-health-tobacco-programs>

In addition, California has a free helpline that offers ongoing one-on-one counseling and cessation materials in several languages. They can be reached by calling 1 -800- NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887).

For additional questions regarding the ordinance, please contact Ventura County Public Health at (805) 201-7867