

# Tobacco-free Sports

## A tobacco-free futures action guide



International Union Against  
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease  
*Promoting lung health in low- and middle-income countries*

**Tobacco Control** *at The Union*  
United for a tobacco-free future

## Contents

---

1.	Purpose of the guide	P3
2.	Tobacco facts	P3
3.	What is a tobacco-free sports policy?	P4
4.	Key elements of a tobacco-free policy	P4
5.	What about exemptions to smoking restrictions?	P4
6.	Benefits of a comprehensive policy	P4
7.	The 3-step guide	P5
	Step 1: Develop a tobacco-free policy	P5
	Sample tobacco-free policy	P6
	Step 2: Implement the tobacco-free policy	P6
	Step 3: Support, monitor and evaluate the policy	P7
8.	Case study: Tobacco-free Olympic and sports venues in China	P8
9.	Answers to common questions	P9
10.	Information and resources	P9
11.	Acknowledgements	P10
12.	References	P10

Author: Anne Jones

Review Board: Fouad Aslam, Tara Singh Bam, Gihan El-Nahas, Burke Fishburn, Lara Garrido Herrero, Mirta Molinari, Lin Yan.

ISBN: 978-2-914365-56-7

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

---

Tobacco has no place in sport as it is the world's leading killer, causing five million deaths each year. As tobacco use also impairs physical performance, there are undeniable health and moral reasons for workplaces and public places to be safe and free from harm caused by tobacco use and secondhand smoke (SHS).

There is a strong and growing Olympic legacy for all types of sports venues to provide tobacco-free and healthy environments for athletes as well as families and children.

A 'best practice' policy is recommended as it is the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of achieving an outcome based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.



© Sofaworld, Dreamstime.com

A tobacco-free policy is defined in the Guide as including smokefree environments as well as environments that are free of all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale.

As most countries are in the early stages of developing smokefree laws, many indoor and outdoor sports venues have not yet implemented effective and enforceable policies to protect their populations from the known harm caused by tobacco use. While there are some good examples of tobacco-free policies in place, not all are comprehensive or equal to best practice.

The Guide outlines in three steps how to develop, implement and support a comprehensive tobacco-free policy including:

- Improving the health of staff, players, members and their families by ending exposure to tobacco use and smoke in sports venues.
- Ending all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale.
- Using ready made resources such as the sample policy, internationally recognised signage, a case study and links to tobacco-free sports resources.

The Guide has great potential to assist sports authorities and managers in improving the health and performances of staff, players, members and their families.

## 2. TOBACCO FACTS

---

1. Approximately five million people die each year from tobacco worldwide with most future deaths predicted to occur in low to middle income countries.
2. SHS from other people's cigarettes causes several diseases in non-smokers including cancers, heart disease, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), respiratory illness and asthma attacks.<sup>1</sup>
3. SHS cannot be controlled by ventilation, air cleaning or spatial separation of smokers from non-smokers. It can also cause significant exposure and health harm in unenclosed areas.<sup>2</sup>
4. There is a growing trend for national smokefree laws requiring workplaces and public places to be smokefree, at least indoors to protect employees. Most countries, however, are still in the early stages of implementing effective and enforceable smokefree laws to protect their populations.
5. The tobacco industry has a long history of misleading and deceiving governments, scientific communities and the public at great cost to human life. For decades the tobacco industry sponsored sports champions and high profile sport (eg Grand Prix racing, cricket, football) to link sporting success and glamour with tobacco.
6. Although tobacco companies misleadingly claim that tobacco products are legal, it is unethical for sports venues to promote and profit from the sale of tobacco products which will kill one in two long term users.
7. 162 countries have ratified the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) – an international treaty that includes commitments to making smokefree environments the norm (Article 8)<sup>3</sup> and protecting public health policies from interference by the tobacco industry (Article 5.3).<sup>4</sup>

### 3. WHAT IS A TOBACCO-FREE SPORTS POLICY?



© Hot99, Dreamstime.com

Every sports venue, club or association should officially adopt a tobacco-free policy that is comprehensive and based on best practice to: protect members, players, children, staff and visitors alike from exposure to SHS; and end all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale that links sport with tobacco in any form.

The sample policy we recommend includes: smokefree environments, such as all indoor areas, stadiums, spectator areas, outdoor walkways; tobacco-free environments that are free of all forms of tobacco advertising or sale; and educational materials for members and staff on how to quit smoking. A condition of membership or association should be for members to respect and comply with the policy.

### 4. KEY ELEMENTS OF A TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

A written policy needs to include four key elements:

#### 1. Smokefree areas

All sports venues – including indoors and outdoor crowded areas – are entirely smokefree. If this is not possible, designated outdoor smoking areas are provided in carefully selected areas that are far enough away from building entrances, thoroughfares and openings such as ventilation ducts, doors and windows to prevent smoke from drifting into smokefree areas.

It's a global trend for workplaces and public places, including sports venues, to be smokefree – Visit <http://www.globalsmokefree.com/gsp/> for more information.

#### 2. A ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale

All forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale, from retail outlets and vending machines are prohibited.

#### 3. A ban on tobacco funding for sports events or scholarships

Funds for sponsoring sporting events or sports scholarships are not accepted from the tobacco industry or related third parties. Sports officials, coaches, staff, members or other persons representing the venue or the club cannot accept free gifts or enter into any financial arrangement, association or partnership with representatives of the tobacco industry either directly or indirectly.

#### 4. Quit smoking materials

In consultation with local health authorities, evidence-based educational materials for quitting smoking are provided as a health service for players, members and staff.

### 5. WHAT ABOUT EXEMPTIONS TO SMOKING RESTRICTIONS?

As enclosed or partly enclosed smoking rooms are unsafe and unacceptable, managers need to decide whether the venue should establish designated outdoor smoking areas, and if so, whether they should be phased out at a later date. If outdoor designated smoking areas are established, management should use the following strategies to reduce the risks of smoke drifting into smokefree areas:

- Limiting the number of designated areas.
- Ensuring that the area is away from cross-traffic, access routes or walkways, air conditioning equipment, and building entrances.
- Providing clear signs stating that designated smoking areas are for smoking only, the name of the authority and that smoking is not permitted elsewhere.
- Providing receptacles to dispose of tobacco litter.
- Evaluating these smoking areas as part of a policy review.

### 6. BENEFITS OF A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY

Benefits of a comprehensive tobacco-free policy include:

- Higher level of compliance with obligations for safe and healthy workplaces.
- Supporting government or pre-existing programs to build healthy environments.
- Cleaner, safer environments with reduced litter and risks of fires.
- Enhanced profile as a community leader in sport by ending sales and promotion of tobacco.

- A more socially responsible and ethical standard of conduct for the sports club or association, its staff, members and visitors when tobacco links are excluded.
- Ending contacts with an industry whose products kill five million people worldwide each year.

## 7. THE 3 - STEP GUIDE

---

### Step 1: Develop a tobacco-free policy

Depending on the institution's current policy, it can take up to six months to fully implement a tobacco-free policy. It may involve some or all of the following measures:

#### Delegation

Start by assigning overall responsibility to a manager to coordinate the development and implementation of the tobacco-free policy. Form a Smokefree Working Group, including smokers and non-smokers with designated responsibilities. Seek support from a high-level champion such as the President or a leader in your sport.

#### Reviewing the status quo

Document the existing pattern of: tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale; the current policy on smokefree areas; and any financial relationships with the tobacco industry; and compare to best practice as outlined in this guide. Conduct a quick survey to identify levels of knowledge, awareness and support for key elements of the policy.

#### Developing policy

Use results of the survey to predict areas of challenge and develop strategies to address each challenge.

If smokefree areas are inadequate or poorly enforced, develop a draft policy statement including what the law or regulation requires, what areas are smokefree, placement of signage, how the policy will be enforced, penalties for breaches, training of staff and locations of closest outdoor designated smoking areas. Penalties should be identified and reviewed, depending on existing laws.

Develop an overall implementation plan to support the draft policy statement, including a communications plan and timeline.

#### Preparing for policy change

The tobacco-free policy and its implementation plan must be approved by the ruling body or authority. Before announcing the new policy to staff, meet with managers and inform them of the following:

- what steps they should take to implement the policy.
- how information will be communicated to staff, members and visitors (e.g. signage, notices, newsletters, websites, tickets).
- responsibilities of staff and members.
- what key messages they should promote to employees.



© Wayne Zhou, Dreamstime.com

## Sample policy for a tobacco-free venue

### Tobacco-free policy for [name the venue]

#### Rationale

The [legal entity] recognises that we have a responsibility to members, their families, staff and all visitors to provide a safe and healthy environment. Exposure to second hand smoke is harmful and legislation/regulations [name them] require our buildings and facilities – both indoors and outdoors – to be tobacco-free [by or since specified date].

#### Who is affected by the policy

This policy applies to every person entering the premises, including managers, staff, officials, players, coaches, contractors, volunteers and all other visitors.

#### All properties are tobacco-free

Properties designated as tobacco-free, include – but are not limited to – the following:

- Stadiums.
- Playing fields.
- Toilets and changing rooms.
- Offices.
- Social functions and hospitality rooms for dinners, meetings, private functions.
- Outdoor walkways used by people to access and exit the venue properties.

[Include a map of the venue that clearly shows all the tobacco-free areas and where smoking may be permitted in an outdoor designated smoking area].

#### Exemptions

[Legal entity] is tobacco-free and there are no exemptions. [If a designated outdoor smoking area is permitted, then it should be located away from public view and identified in the policy, with clear signage as follows: “DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA. This area is designated for outdoor smoking only. No smoking is permitted and penalties apply”].

#### Compliance and enforcement

Trained staff and volunteers will enforce the policy. Any person smoking will politely be asked to stop and be reminded about the tobacco-free policy. If the offence continues, a second verbal warning will be issued and reinforced by a manager. If this warning is ignored, a penalty will be issued. A telephone complaints line will be promoted to report breaches or provide feedback for further action.

#### Advertising, promotion, sponsorship and sale of tobacco products

[Legal entity] will not advertise, promote or allow the sale of tobacco products in any form on its premises or at sporting events under its control.

#### Financial connections with the tobacco industry

[Legal entity], its office bearers and employees will not accept funds for sports sponsorship, scholarships, events or other material inducements directly or indirectly from the tobacco industry.

#### Quit smoking materials

Evidence-based quit smoking materials will be provided and promoted.

#### Timing

The commencement date for the policy is [specify date].

#### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed six months from commencement and then on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is sustained, effective and up to date.

Signed and dated by Management of [legal entity]

## Step 2: Implement the tobacco-free policy

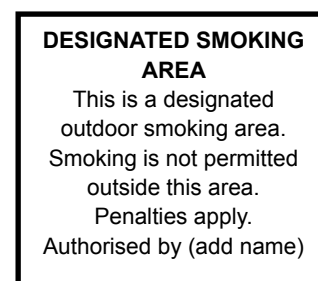
Announce the policy and the timeline for implementation to staff, players, members, user groups, contractors and leaseholders. Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and respond to feedback throughout the implementation process.

Implement the communications plan. Messages should include:

- rationale for the policy, including health effects of tobacco, economic and social consequences of tobacco use and exposure.
- timeline for implementation of the policy.
- availability of evidence based educational materials or advice for smokers to quit smoking.

## Examples of tools

1. A sample of a tobacco-free policy (see page 6).
2. Handouts for smokers who breach the tobacco-free policy.
3. The use of a venue map to identify the signage placement strategy.
4. Internationally recognised signage for a tobacco-free venue.
5. A sign for outdoor designated smoking areas.
6. Simple messages for inclusion in educational materials or as public announcements, such as “Welcome to our tobacco-free sports club” and contacts for help to quit smoking.



## Key points

1. A venue map can be used to develop the placement strategy. Placement strategy includes type, size, location and number of signs for each building or facility within the venue grounds. Priority or “hot spot” locations include entrances to buildings; toilets, break-out areas; eating areas; and outdoor areas for competitions.
2. Good, clear signs will help with enforcement.
3. The tobacco-free venue can be promoted using a combination of media sources such as: signage, tickets, programs, newsletters, notice boards, websites and public announcements.

## Step 3: Support, monitor and evaluate the policy

### 1. Collect feedback from staff and stakeholders

Work with local health authorities to develop a survey to identify the level of knowledge, awareness and support among staff, members, spectators, smokers and non-smokers for key elements of the tobacco-free policy. Six months after the policy has been introduced, consider conducting a follow up survey to measure improvements and to identify any problem areas.

### 2. Support and follow up

Develop a plan to help smokers to quit (e.g. promote web-based cessation advice if available or seek advice from local health authorities to provide free or low cost educational materials on notice boards or in newsletters). Use rewards or certificates of appreciation as incentives for those who quit smoking or stay quit after 12 months.

Plan a high-profile event or promotional activity, such as World No Tobacco Day on 31 May to celebrate the implementation of the policy.

Prepare for physical changes needed for the policy to take effect (e.g. make sure that no tobacco will be sold by the relevant date, that ashtrays are removed from tobacco-free areas and no smoking signs placed in toilets and stairwells). Consider installing smoke detectors in problem areas.

Distribute signs and communications materials to be used when the policy takes effect.

Job postings for new staff should make clear that the venue is tobacco-free and that no smoking is the norm.

A two hour face-to-face training programme as a minimum is recommended for staff, volunteers and potential enforcers in security, cleaning, hospitality and administration.

## Key points

- Staff and volunteers need to know about the tobacco-free policy and key staff in security, cleaning, hospitality and administration will need to be trained in the policy and how to enforce it. Specific areas include: how it will be implemented; who will enforce it and the responsibilities and duties of staff in communicating that the venue is tobacco-free.
- Ideally, the policy should be self-enforcing; however, where smoking prevalence is high an enforcement strategy should include clear statements about responsibilities and procedure for complaints. A graduated approach is recommended starting with verbal warnings and increasing to penalties if warnings and signage continue to be ignored.
- A venue contact telephone line and/or email contact should be promoted so that members or staff can report complaints or provide feedback for further action.
- Managers and staff need to ensure that the tobacco-free policy continues to protect people from SHS. Reviewing the policy is important and a review date should be set for six months after commencement and then on an annual basis to obtain feedback on how the policy may be improved.

### 3. Monitor and evaluate

Monitor and respond to feedback from staff and visitors - specifically on implementation and enforcement processes. Identify any areas of non-compliance or confusion and make sure the policy is being applied equitably.

#### Key indicators to measure and evaluate

- The level of compliance by user groups. For example, are staff, members, managers following the policy? Is signage effective? Are people smoking in the toilets and change rooms?
- The level of satisfaction with policy. For example, is the non-compliance strategy working? Has satisfaction with the policy increased amongst non-smokers, smokers, staff, members? Do the policy enforcers need more training? Are complaints being adequately addressed?
- Policy outcomes. For example, what percentage of smokers have quit or tried to quit? Has tobacco litter decreased? Are members and staff more aware and supportive of the tobacco-free environment?

Debrief the Tobacco-free Working Group and assign duties for ongoing activities including maintaining the monitoring and evaluation plan.

## 8. CASE STUDY: TOBACCO-FREE OLYMPIC AND SPORTS VENUES IN CHINA

---

The 2008 Olympic and Para-Olympic Games in six Olympic cities in China provided an opportunity for government authorities to develop tobacco-free regulations and policies to protect people from exposure to tobacco smoke in sports venues and other public places. The FCTC, which requires member states to protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke, also played a major role in motivating the Chinese Government to develop and facilitate tobacco-free legislation, regulations and policies.

#### Rationale

- Over 20 years ago the International Olympic Committee (IOC) established a tradition for sports events to be tobacco-free. In 2000 the Sydney Olympic Games were credited with setting the gold standard for tobacco-free sports venues supported by 100% smokefree legislation for workplaces including restaurants. The policy required a ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and for all indoor and outdoor areas of sports venues to be tobacco-free, with smoking limited to a select number of outdoor designated smoking areas.
- In 2005 China ratified the FCTC including a provision (Article 8) that obligates member states to take effective measures to protect people from tobacco smoke. Article 8 Guidelines specify that all indoor workplaces and indoor public places should be smokefree.
- Government leaders in China were keen to show the rest of the world that their international sporting events were successfully tobacco-free.

#### Background

- In 2006 WHO organised a planning workshop for government and non-government health leaders to develop an action plan for tobacco-free games and sports venues.
- In 2007 WHO received a request for support from the Beijing Olympic Committee Organising Committee (BOCOG) and worked closely with The Union to develop a guide and a plan of action for sustainable tobacco-free sports venues and environments in general.
- There were nearly 40 Olympic venues located in six cities, and each city was working towards a smokefree regulation with varying stages of progress by the time the Games commenced.

#### The tobacco-free policy

The key recommendations for tobacco-free venues were independently observed at a sample of venues:

- Indoor areas were smokefree and there was no evidence of tobacco advertising, promotions or sponsorships. One indirect advertising exception occurred when a tobacco company representative carrying the Olympic torch appeared briefly on the company's website.
- "No smoking" signage and media messages were in place using international signs and electronic scoreboards. For the first time, people entering the venues received mobile phone messages welcoming them to the tobacco-free venue.
- Cigarette lighters were confiscated by security staff at entry points to venues.
- Volunteers consistently advised that smoking was not allowed at the venues.

#### Training of staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers received broad training in a range of policies and procedures including the tobacco-free policy. WHO and The Union assisted by jointly producing a guide for managers of tobacco-free Olympic venues. They worked with health authorities and Olympic organisers to disseminate the guide to nearly 40 Olympic venues and hundreds of smaller sports clubs with funding support from the Bloomberg Initiative.

#### Public education

Coordinated tobacco-free mass media messages on trains and buses using electronic boards, mobile TVs and television were advertised by government authorities before, during and after the Games period.

#### Monitoring the policy

Although a formal evaluation was not carried out, Beijing Health authorities inspected the sports venues to ensure that managers were



aware of requirements for a tobacco-free policy, and conducted a survey of transport users indicating a high level of recall of the mass media messages. An independent observational study of a select sample of venues found that the tobacco-free policy was implemented fairly successfully, with some smoking occurring in outdoor areas around entrances to buildings.

## Results

1. Observers reported venues were tobacco-free indoors and supported by several measures such as No Smoking signs, trained volunteers and new technology, including electronic scoreboards, mobile phone messages and the confiscation of cigarette lighters by security staff using x-ray machines at venue entrances.
2. Some smoking was observed in outdoor areas around entrances where smokefree signage was not prominent. A more comprehensive assessment of the policy was not possible, however, without a formal evaluation process.
3. Government health authorities and leaders are continuing to develop and implement smokefree legislation and regulations, commencing with the six Olympic cities, as part of their commitment to the FCTC, the Olympic legacy and funding agreements under the Bloomberg Initiative.

## 9. ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

---

Q1: Is secondhand smoke harmful?

*Medical evidence is irrefutable that SHS or passive smoking causes diseases and harm to others and that children are particularly vulnerable. The scientific evidence is clear that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.*

Q2: Why should we be tobacco-free?

*We have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace and public place for staff, members, children and visitors alike to enjoy sport and all our facilities. Tobacco-free sports provide a much healthier environment and smokefree air can help to improve fitness and athletic performance. The productivity and morale of our staff will improve resulting in better service to all.*

Q3: Will our venue suffer financially if smoking is banned?

*The majority of people, including smokers, prefer smokefree environments as they are safer and more enjoyable than smoky places. International evidence shows that businesses do not suffer revenue losses after introduction of smokefree laws and regulations.*

Q4: Why can't we rely on ventilation to clear the air?

*Air conditioning and ventilation systems do not remove all the dangerous components in tobacco smoke. There are over 4000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, and even if the visible smoke is removed, toxic gases, vapours and small particles of smoke are harmful to health and cannot be removed mechanically.*

Q5: What about the rights of smokers?

*This policy is about where people can smoke so that their smoke doesn't cause harm to others. Every person has a basic right to breathe clean air that is not contaminated by carcinogens and other harmful substances in tobacco smoke.*

Q6: What happens if someone smokes in a smokefree area?

*The person smoking will be approached by a staff member, reminded that the venue is smokefree and asked not to smoke. If the smoker persists, security staff or a complaints line can be contacted for further action including a penalty. Smokers can also be given a small handout card with the quitline number or quit smoking tips and the location of an outdoor designated smoking area.*

## 10. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

---

For resources on smokefree sports policies visit:

[www.smokefreeolympics.com/index.php?section=7&id=87](http://www.smokefreeolympics.com/index.php?section=7&id=87)

For tobacco factsheets visit:

- Tobacco Control Resource Center <http://globalink.org/factsheets/en/>
- Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) <http://www.fctc.org>
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) [www.theunion.org](http://www.theunion.org)
- World Health Organization (WHO) Tobacco-free Initiative. [www.who.int/tobacco/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/)

For resources on global smokefree partnerships visit: <http://www.globalsmokefree.com/gsp/index.php>

For Article 8 Guidelines for countries that are party to Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), visit [http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines\\_art8/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines_art8/en/index.html)



© Shariff Che' Lah, Dreamstime.com

## 11. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

With thanks to all those who contributed to the review process and to Union partners in particular Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and World Health Organization.

## 12. REFERENCES

---

1. The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke: a report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: Dept of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of Smoking and Health; Washington, DC: 2006. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2006/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2006/) and at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>
2. Smokefree policies. Factsheet 2. The Union 2008. <http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org/content/en/10/2.-Smokefree-policies>
3. Guidelines for the implementation of Article 8 “Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke”. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. [http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines\\_art8/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines_art8/en/index.html)[http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines\\_art8/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/guidelines_art8/en/index.html)
4. Framework Convention on Tobacco Control [www.who.int/fctc/en/](http://www.who.int/fctc/en/)



© Carmentian, Dreamstime.com

## Contact Us

International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)  
10 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JQ, UK

**Tel:** +44 131 226 2428

**Fax:** +44 131 220 0529

[tobaccofreeunion@theunion.org](mailto:tobaccofreeunion@theunion.org)

[www.theunion.org](http://www.theunion.org)

[www.tobaccofreeunion.org](http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org)

**ISBN 978-2-914365-56-7**



**International Union Against  
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease**  
*Promoting lung health in low- and middle-income countries*

**Tobacco Control** *at The Union*  
**United for a tobacco-free future**