



Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Rockingham Health Care, Inc. and its subsidiaries, hereinafter referred to as "RMH," that no Employee or Volunteer may smoke or use tobacco on any RMH property. In addition, tobacco use is strongly discouraged by any Employees or Volunteers in the immediate vicinity of an RMH property to promote a healthy, tobacco-free environment.

Reasons for Being a Tobacco-Free Hospital:

1. A tobacco-free RMH is consistent with our mission to be a healthcare leader and role model for our Employees and our community.
2. This policy supports the Healthy People 2010 goal to reduce cigarette smoking by adults and adolescents.
3. A tobacco-free environment is healthier and safer for our Employees and Volunteers.
4. Research shows that fewer young people will take up smoking if their workplace is smoke-free. This presents a unique public health opportunity.
5. With decreased use of tobacco, workplace productivity has been shown to increase and absenteeism to decrease.
6. Secondhand smoke meets the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's criteria for a potential cancer-causing agent. (OSHA is the federal agency responsible for health and safety regulations in the workplace.)
7. Patients negatively respond to being cared for by a healthcare worker whose clothes, breath and hair smell of tobacco.
8. In addition to protecting nonsmokers, workplace smoking restrictions may also encourage smokers to quit or reduce their consumption of tobacco products.
9. It is now widely accepted that wounds heal more quickly and are less likely to become infected in individuals who do not use tobacco.
10. A tobacco-free RMH can help reduce the effects of tobacco use – the leading preventable cause of death and disease in our workplace and our community.
11. Increasingly more healthcare organizations around the country are opting to become tobacco-free. By making this decision, RMH will take the lead in providing this positive example for the larger community.

This policy's success depends on cooperation by every RMH Employee. Everyone shares responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy. Everyone benefits from mutual respect and consideration.

Policy Provisions:

1. Employees may not smoke or use tobacco products anytime during paid work time, including paid breaks. Volunteers may not smoke or use tobacco products during his/her shift.
2. Tobacco use is prohibited throughout Employees' shifts, including unpaid time off premises as the smell of smoke may remain on employees' clothes, breath, hair or skin.
3. Employees, Volunteers and contractors are not permitted to smoke or use tobacco in any RMH building or on any RMH grounds or parking lot owned or leased by RMH or on adjacent grounds.
4. Tobacco shall not be sold anywhere in RMH buildings, grounds, etc.

5. Patients and Visitors are also barred from smoking in RMH facilities or on RMH grounds. If needed, employees may seek assistance from their manager or from the EAP Coordinator on how to address patients or visitors they observe who are deviating from the provisions of this policy.
6. Adherence to this policy by Employees is a condition of employment, and deviations from this policy will result in corrective action. Initially, an Employee will be counseled for deviating from this policy. Subsequent deviations from this policy will warrant the progressive steps described in the RMH Coaching, Counseling and Progressive Discipline Policy.
7. Candidates for employment will be advised that this is a Tobacco-Free Environment.
8. Every employee of RMH, especially management employees are responsible for addressing situations when Employees and Volunteers refuse to comply with this policy.
9. Employees and RMH affiliated physicians will be offered smoking cessation classes free of charge that may be taken during time off from work.
10. Employees and RMH affiliated physicians may purchase products to curb the desire for tobacco from the pharmacy at a reduced cost. Nicotine dependence treatment services are available to Employees and physicians. As applicable, Employees are encouraged to seek assistance from the Employee Health Nurse or the Employee Assistance Counselor, or to participate in tobacco cessation programs.

References:

Human Resources Policy: Coaching, Counseling and Progressive Discipline

Date Reviewed: 12/1/09

Date Revised: 1/1/08

Most Recent Final Approval: 12/1/09

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Vice President, Human Resources / Date