

Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy

Group responsible: Corporate and financial services

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Scope

This policy aims to discourage smoking in public outdoor areas where people, particularly children and young people gather. The policy promotes healthy lifestyles and relies on community support to encourage behavioural change.

Council-owned enclosed spaces including community halls, Council offices, libraries and vehicles are covered excluded from this policy as they are covered as smoke-free workplaces and public areas under the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990.

Objectives

- to foster healthy communities in Southland District by discouraging smoking in Council controlled open spaces, public buildings, workplaces and at Council supported events
- to support the government's goal for a smoke-free New Zealand by 2025 by reinforcing nationally delivered messages on the harmful effects of smoking
- to reduce the uptake of smoking by children and young people in Southland District.
- to promote a smoke-free lifestyle as being both desirable and the norm in Southland District.

Alignment with Council strategy

The Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy will contribute to Southland District Council's vision "to have thriving, healthy Southland communities".

It is also consistent with the Council outcomes:

- supporting our communities; and
- being an effective Council.

Definitions

Council supported event means any planned public or social occasion which Southland District Council endorses, promotes or provides with funds and/or resources.

Park means an area of land with or without facilities for rest and recreation which is owned or managed by Southland District Council for the enjoyment of the public.

Playground means an area used for outdoor play or recreation, especially by children containing recreational equipment such as slides and swings.

Reserve means any area defined in Section 2 (1) of the Reserves Act 1977 including cemeteries, walking tracks, green spaces, playgrounds and sports fields.

Smoke or smoking includes the carrying of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other lighted smoking equipment or product. This includes tobacco products and other psychoactive substances.

Background

To achieve New Zealand government's goal of a smoke-free New Zealand by 2025, local government must be an active partner.

The Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 (the Act) aims to reduce the exposure of non-smokers to harmful effects caused by the smoking of others. The act has a focus on reducing social approval of tobacco use, particularly among young people.

While the act focuses on enclosed public places, Southland District Council is proactive in fostering healthy, smoke-free communities. The Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy aims to encourage the community to refrain from smoking in public outdoor areas, specifically in playgrounds, parks and sports grounds, and at Council supported events.

The vast majority of New Zealanders (75%) do not smoke and most people support restrictions on smoking, especially around children. A recent survey found that two thirds of all New Zealanders support the expansion of smoke-free areas to outdoor areas that children use.

Policy statements

- Council will discourage smoking in all Council controlled open spaces and public areas.
- Council's Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy will be provided to all event coordinators planning to run an event at a Council owned and/or managed outdoor area.
- Smoke-free signs will be placed at Council controlled areas which have a high usage by children and young people (See 6.0, Type 1 areas).
- New and renewed leases for sports grounds will contain a requirement for the grounds to be smoke-free.

Affected areas

Although this policy covers all Council controlled open spaces and public areas, Type 1 areas (listed below) will be the primary focus of Council resources. This will occur by way of additional signage and awareness initiatives.

Signs will also be placed in Type 2 areas, however, this will be proportionate to the nature and use of these areas.

Type 1 areas include:

- playgrounds
- skate parks

- sports fields.

Type 2 areas include:

- gardens
- parks, reserves and cemeteries
- roads, streets and footpaths.

Implementation

Information and education

Southland District Council will implement a long term communications plan focused on achieving positive attitudinal and behaviour change by smokers.

Key elements of the communications plan include:

- signage
- promotion on the Council website and Facebook page
- features in First Edition and other Council publications
- promotional material in libraries and Council offices
- smoke-free advertising (posters, banners etc) at Council supported events, particularly those with a youth focus
- consistent messages through key influencers (councillors, community boards, community development area subcommittees and Youth Council)
- promotion through the First Word radio programme; and
- direct marketing to key stakeholders such as sports groups/clubs.

Signs

The public will be encouraged to refrain from smoking in Council controlled outdoor and enclosed spaces and at Council supported events. Signs will be displayed at high use parks and children's playground areas with positive smoke-free messages to discourage smoking in these areas. By focusing on Council controlled outdoor and enclosed spaces and Council supported events, Southland District Council will send a positive message that community health and the environment should be protected from the effects of smoking.

It is recognised that smoke-free information may not be appropriate in remote locations, where there is low usage and exposure of the area, or where there are other hazards which take priority over smoke-free signage in the area. Initially, where feasible, Southland District parks will display the smoke-free symbol in the form of stickers adhered to the existing signage. Smoke-free logos will be added to all other reserve signs on renewal.

Events

Events supported by Council may be promoted as smoke-free events. Smoke-free messages may be included in promotional material and on Council's website and Facebook page. All event coordinators planning to run an event at a Council owned and/or managed outdoor area will be provided with a copy of this policy.

Leases

A copy of the Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy may be provided to all parties that lease Council owned sports grounds. Leases may specify that smoking is not permitted at any time and that smoking constitutes a breach of the tenancy agreement.

Enforcement

The policy is not a ban on smoking in a public place. No enforcement measures will be used against those who breach the policy.

Through the Smoke-free Open Spaces Policy, Council empowers communities to take ownership of promoting healthy, smoke-free lifestyle choices. Communities can use this policy to encourage behavioural change and communicate messages to children and young people about the harmful effects of smoking.

Partnerships

Southland District Council will work in partnership to build on existing resources and past successes of other agencies operating locally and at a national level. Key local partnerships include:

- community boards and community development area subcommittees
- sports clubs using or leasing Council land and facilities
- schools
- Public Health South
- The Cancer Society
- Sport Southland.