

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Smoke-Free Conference Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Effective August 15, 2008, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has adopted a smoke-free conference policy. SAMHSA's Smoke-Free Conference Policy requires that all conferences organized or primarily sponsored by SAMHSA be held in a smoke-free community. This policy does not apply to SAMHSA grantees or conference grantees.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. SAMHSA Sponsor – Any major conference or event for which SAMHSA is the sole or primary organizer or sponsor.
2. SAMHSA Co-sponsor – Any major conference or event for which SAMHSA is one of the funders.
3. Conference – Conferences include symposia, seminars, workshops, and any other organized and formal meeting lasting one or more days.
4. Smoke-free community – A smoke-free community is a locality covered by state or local laws or regulations that, at a minimum, make enclosed workplaces and public places, including restaurants and meeting facilities, smoke-free.

III. BACKGROUND

There is a compelling body of scientific evidence indicating that secondhand smoke exposure poses serious health risks to nonsmokers. Secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace has been linked to an increased risk for heart disease and lung cancer among adult nonsmokers. Secondhand smoke has been designated as a known carcinogen (cancer-causing agent) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Toxicology Program and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has concluded that secondhand smoke is an occupational carcinogen. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate this exposure.

Based on these findings, it is critical to protect the health of SAMHSA employees and other conference attendees to the greatest extent possible.

IV. POLICY

A. SAMHSA Smoke-Free Conference Policy

This policy is intended to protect SAMHSA employees and other conference participants from the adverse health effects associated with secondhand smoke exposure.

- To be in compliance with this policy, SAMHSA-sponsored conferences must be held in a locality covered by state or local laws or regulations that, at a minimum, make enclosed workplaces and public places, including restaurants and meeting facilities, smoke-free. To identify these jurisdictions, conference planners should use the list of smoke-free jurisdictions found at <http://smokefreemeetings.cancer.gov>.
- Conferences or meetings are subject to this policy when: (1) SAMHSA is the sole or primary organizer or sponsor of the meeting; (2) the number of participants is 20 or more; and (3) an exception does not apply (see section entitled "Exceptions"). This policy does not apply to SAMHSA grantees or conference grantees.
- SAMHSA encourages adherence to the Smoke-Free Conference Policy for conferences for which SAMHSA is a co-sponsor.

B. Exceptions:

Certain exceptions to this policy apply. Conference arrangements must be made in accordance the requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act (41 USC section 253) and the requirements of the Federal Travel Regulations (41 USC section 301).

In addition to the legal requirements set forth above, exceptions to this policy include:

- Conferences/meetings held as part of a grantee site visit.
- Conferences that need to take place in a particular location to meet with specific constituents.

SAMHSA reserves the right to grant an exception to the policy when abiding by it would be unfeasible due to special circumstances.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Office of Program Services (OPS)

- OPS will monitor compliance with this policy and grant exceptions to it.
- OPS will retain documentation of approved exceptions.

B. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

- CSAP will periodically review and provide recommendations to ensure that the policy remains current. SAMHSA/CSAP will maintain a website with relevant information regarding the policy.

C. Employees, contractors, and fellows

- All SAMHSA employees, contractors, fellows, students, visitors and others are responsible for complying with the smoke-free conference policy when planning conferences sponsored by SAMHSA.

D. Supervisors

- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees under their direction are aware of the policy and comply with it.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/index.htm>
- B. Task Force on Community Preventive Services. The guide to community preventive services: tobacco use prevention and control. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2001; 20(sSuppl2): 1-88.
- C. Competition in Contracting Act (41 U.S.C. sec. 253)
- D. Federal Travel Regulations (41 C.F.R. 301-74) including Appendix E to Part 301
- E. Protecting Federal Employees and the Public from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke in the Federal Workplace, Executive Order 13058, August 9, 1997