



# Help workers blow their habit up in smoke

Despite the medical facts about tobacco, smoking continues to be a part of our lives—both at home and at work. Even if you don't smoke, you probably know someone who does. Most of us know the harm that smoking can cause. But for those with the habit, quitting can seem impossible.

IHSA has collected the following information that can help people who want to quit. Companies can use this information to put together a smoking cessation program for their employees.

## Why Workers Should Stop Smoking

According to the Ministry of Health, smoking costs the Ontario economy about \$2 billion a year in health care costs. Workers who smoke are at higher risk of contracting certain diseases. These diseases are not only caused by exposure to cigarette smoke but also by exposure to other hazardous substances in the workplace.

Because of the health effects, smoking has been blamed for lost productivity that costs the Ontario economy about \$5 billion a year. That means there is a very real cost to your company if you have smokers on the payroll. There is even an increased risk of a fire if cigarettes (and matches, lighters, etc.) are not disposed of properly.

The goal of the provincial Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy is to reduce the number of smokers by 10% by 2023. It's also trying to decrease smoking-related deaths by 5,000 and reduce general exposure to second-hand smoke throughout Ontario.

In Ontario, smoking at work is governed by the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*. This Act bans smoking in enclosed workplaces, including buildings, structures, construction-site trailer offices, loading docks, and delivery trucks or other work vehicles. A person who does not comply with the Act could be fined up to \$5,000. For corporations, there is no maximum fine.



## How Employers Can Help

Quitting is not easy, especially for people who are frequently reminded of the habit by working with other smokers. As an employer, you can play an important role in helping the workers who want to quit smoking:

- Find out if your workplace employee assistance program (EAP) offers counselling to employees who quit smoking. If it does, let your employees know about it.
- Hold a “quit smoking” contest.
- Host a health fair or “lunch and learn” where workers can learn about support services.
- Look into subsidizing or sharing the cost of devices or other aids that may help stop smoking.
- Adopt a smoke-free policy at work.
- Inform workers about resources that are available to help them stop smoking.

## Resources

Workers who want to stop smoking may find help and resources by visiting the Smokers’ Helpline on the Canadian Cancer Society’s website: [smokershelpline.ca](http://smokershelpline.ca). A wide range of quitting resources are also available through the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport on its website: [ontario.ca/page/support-quit-smoking](http://ontario.ca/page/support-quit-smoking)

## How IHSA Can Help

IHSA has created a topic page for people who want to quit smoking. There you’ll find information, safety talks, and more. You can find it under **Smoking Cessation** in the **Topics & Hazards** section of our website

IHSA’s free *Quit Smoking* Poster (P054) can be downloaded from the **Free Product Downloads** section under **Products** on the IHSA website.

**IHSA.ca**  
Work Safe for Life

**It's never too late to quit smoking**

- 20 minutes after quitting**  
Your pulse and blood pressure return to normal.
- 24 hours after quitting**  
Your chance of having a heart attack drops.
- 72 hours after quitting**  
You can smell and taste things better and breathing becomes easier.
- 2 weeks after quitting**  
Your circulation improves and walking becomes easier.
- 1 year after quitting**  
You've cut your risk of heart disease in half.

**Please don't quit quitting.**

**Keep your promise**  
to come home healthy and safe every day.

**Here's why I want you to quit smoking:**

- 32% of workers in the trades smoke—I don't want you to be one of them!
- If you're exposed to both tobacco smoke and asbestos, your risk of cancer is more than 50x higher than the general population.
- You're supposed to protect me from dangers such as second hand smoke.

In the same way that you need a toolkit to do your job, you also need a toolkit to quit smoking. It takes skill power—not just willpower—to quit.  
Help is there for you. You just need to ask for it.

**smokers helpline** To learn more, visit [smokershelpline.ca](http://smokershelpline.ca) or call 1-877-513-5333

Message provided by IHSA and Ottawa Public Health

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