



Smokefree Parks and Beaches Fact Sheet



Why are tobacco-free parks and beaches policies important?

- *Tobacco-free parks and beaches policies protect visitors from harmful secondhand smoke.*
 - It is not healthy to breathe any amount of tobacco smoke^[1].
 - Any exposure to secondhand smoke is especially harmful to high risk populations such as children, people with asthma, elderly, and pregnant women^[2].
 - Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 dangerous chemicals. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke are breathing in many of these same chemicals, including almost 70 chemicals that cause cancer^[1, 2].
 - Outdoor smoking bans reduce areas where people are exposed to secondhand smoke, help to de-normalize smoking, and support people who are trying to quit smoking.
- *Tobacco-free parks and beaches policies protect the environment by reducing litter, pollution from tobacco product waste, and wildfires.*
 - Tobacco product waste contains many of the same toxins and carcinogens found in tobacco products^[3].
 - Waste from e-cigarette products can contain plastics, nicotine and hazardous lithium-ion batteries^[4, 5].
 - Cigarette butts are the most common form of trash found at beach cleanups locally, nationally, and globally^[6].
 - Up to two-third of every smoked cigarette is discarded on the ground and the toxic waste ends up on the streets and in drains and water^[7].
 - The chemicals found in tobacco product waste can be absorbed by plants and soil, kill fish and pollinating bees, and contaminate drinking water^[8, 9].
 - Children, pets, and aquatic and marine animals are at risk of ingesting discarded cigarette butts^[10].
 - In 2017 alone, 39 wildfires in California were caused by discarded cigarette butts^[11].
- *Tobacco-free parks and beaches promote healthy behavior for children.*
 - Parks promote active living and healthy behaviors.
 - Tobacco-free parks and beaches reinforce a positive public health message to youth and reduces youth opportunities to smoke.
 - Tobacco-free policies reduce the number of youth who would experiment with using tobacco by demonstrating a tobacco-free community norm^[12].

How are smokefree laws protecting local communities?

- Three out of four (72%) California voters support a comprehensive ban on outdoor smoking^[13].
- More than 60 California counties and cities have adopted a smokefree beach policy^[14].
- More than 200 California counties and cities have adopted a smokefree parks policy^[15].
- Four out of five Americans support policies that prohibit the use of all tobacco products at public parks^[16].

California State Law

On October 11, 2019, Senate Bill 8 was signed into law (*Stats. 2019, Ch. 761, Sec. 2.*)^[17]. It added Section 5008.10 to the Public Resources Code (PRC). This law prohibits smoking and vaping tobacco and marijuana in most areas of California state parks and beaches and the disposal of cigars and cigarettes in a State park or beach unless it is into an appropriate waste receptacle. Violators can be fined up to \$25.

PRC Section 5008 includes exemptions that allow smoking and vaping tobacco and marijuana in State parks and beaches in the following areas or under the following circumstances:

- paved roadways or parking facilities,
- in connection with good faith practice of a religious belief or ceremony,
- as a prop in a film, television program, or other audiovisual work permitted by the California Film Commission.

Local Best Practices

PRC Section 5008.10 only applies to State properties. Therefore, it is important for local jurisdictions to continue to work to make local parks and beaches 100% smokefree and tobacco-free, without exemptions. Exemptions such as designating smoking areas can confuse visitors. It can make them think smoking is allowed throughout the park or beach, even if restricted to a specific area, and can limit compliance with the policy. Some things that local jurisdictions can do are:

- Engage the community to eliminate tobacco and marijuana use and litter in all areas of local or regional parks and beaches.

Restricting smoking/vaping in all areas of a beach or park, including roads, parking structures, parking lots, and campgrounds – is the most effective way to reduce waste and exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Simplify enforcement by not including any exemptions. Excluding exemptions maximizes the public health impact and simplifies enforcement by prohibiting smoking both tobacco and marijuana products.

PRC Section 5008.10 allows smoking tobacco or marijuana products on a State beach or park if used (1) on paved roadways or parking facilities, (2) for religious purposes, or (3) as a prop for film or TV productions. These types of exemptions can complicate enforcement as officials will need to sort out what may constitute a legitimate excuse from an otherwise prohibited use. Exemptions can also erode local policy if the public perceives smoking is allowed.

References

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