

Preparing for a Smoke-Free Illinois Sample Newsletter Article

The article below contains information on a variety of topics regarding Smoke-Free Illinois. Select the paragraphs that are appropriate for your newsletter.

On January 1, 2008, Illinois will become the 22nd smoke-free state in the nation. Beginning in the New Year, there will be no more smoking in any indoor workplace or public place. This includes all offices, warehouses, factories, transportation facilities/garages, private clubs, and banquet halls, as well as restaurants, bars, and bowling alleys.

The only exceptions are some tobacco retailers, 25% of hotel rooms, and some nursing home rooms. People may still smoke in their cars and homes, as long as their home is not used as an office open to the public or as a licensed day care facility.

Cities, villages, and counties may have their own smoke-free laws to make more areas smokefree, such as outdoor dining and playgrounds. Local laws, however, cannot allow smoking where the State Law does not allow it.

As a result of the Smoke-Free Illinois Act and the health risk secondhand smoke has on our employees and visitors, [company name] will be implementing a new smoke-free policy on [effective date]. After this date, there will be no smoking anywhere indoors or within 15 feet from doorways, windows, and vents. For your convenience, [company name] has created an outdoor smoking area located at [location/description of outdoor smoking area]. Please notify visitors of this new policy.

Towns and states that have already gone smoke-free have seen a reduction in asthma attacks, heart attacks, and cancer rates. They protect the health of customers, but more importantly, the health of the workers who could be exposed to secondhand smoke for full eight-hour shifts.

Research shows that companies with smoke-free policies save an average of 10% on cleaning costs and up to seven percent on construction and maintenance. There is a significant decreased risk of fire, as cigarettes are cited as the number one cause of fires. Smoke-free businesses also report lower health insurance costs, increased productivity, and reduced absenteeism.

In addition, smoke-free laws actually have a positive economic effect on restaurants and bars. Although there tends to be a dip in business right after a smoke-free law takes effect, especially in cold months like January, restaurants and bars can ultimately expect an increase in revenue. Research shows that after time, business will go up as people begin to discover establishments they may have previously avoided because of the smoky air.