



European Healthy  
Stadia® Network



# TOBACCO-FREE STADIA GUIDANCE: SHORT GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

Sports clubs and sports facilities have a lot to gain from adopting a tobacco-free policy, prohibiting the use, sale and promotion of any type of tobacco product within a stadium environment. A well enforced tobacco control policy protects fans, staff, players and guests from the health hazards of exposure to second-hand smoke, and breaks any association between the tobacco industry and sport. It ensures that stadium users can enjoy the right to clean air which has become an international standard of comfort and safety, and which is now often expected at sports events in many countries across Europe and the rest of the world.

**Aim:** This short guide aims to help sports organisations develop and enforce an effective tobacco control policy for stadium environments. The guide provides sports organisations with the rational for adopting a strong tobacco-free policy in stadia, and summarises the process required.

**Audience:** Decision makers at 'board level' who influence club/stadium policy, and senior members of staff from facilities management, security, communications and human resources.

**Further support:** We have also developed an in-depth version of this guide, providing detailed support for staff implementing the policy, including tools, templates and links to training modules.

**The in-depth guide is currently only available in English, and available with other resources at: [www.healthystadia.eu/tobacco/guidance](http://www.healthystadia.eu/tobacco/guidance)**



# 1. Why adopt a tobacco-free policy at your stadium?

**Smoking and health:** The primary reason for making sports stadia tobacco-free is to protect stadium users and staff from the immediate dangers of second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure. Protecting non-smokers from the hazards of SHS exposure should be a *minimum standard* of health and safety at all European football stadia.

## Secondhand smoke exposure: the facts

- Secondhand-smoke is tobacco smoke inhaled involuntarily by those who are not smoking
- Globally, SHS kills some 600,000 people a year
- About a quarter of those killed by SHS are children
- 80% of SHS related deaths in adults are caused by cardiovascular disease
- SHS also causes bronchitis, asthma, emphysema and a range of cancers; SHS raises the risk of developing lung cancer in non-smokers by up to a quarter
- Heart attack rates drop almost immediately when the introduction of a strong smoking ban reduces a population's exposure to SHS
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

**Safety considerations:** In addition to specific risks to health of tobacco use and SHS, there are also key reasons why clubs/stadia should implement a tobacco-free policy that are of direct benefit to stadium operations, stadium users, and the wider sports community. These include:

- Reducing incidence of heart attacks at your stadium - even brief exposure to SHS can damage the lining of blood vessels and can cause a fatal heart attack
- Minimising potential fire hazards presented by lit tobacco use, protecting people from injury and infrastructure from damage
- Minimising tobacco-related litter, thereby reducing costs of infrastructure cleaning and maintenance
- De-normalising any association between sport and tobacco usage, and reducing the initiation of smoking amongst young people
- Reducing the impact of tobacco and SHS on sports performance at both professional and recreational level
- Respecting the right to good health and to breathe clean air of all stadium users, making the stadium environment safer and more comfortable.

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# 1. Why adopt a tobacco-free policy at your stadium? (continued)

Adopting and enforcing a strong tobacco-free policy is one of the most important steps a sports club/stadium can take to protect the health and safety of fans and members of staff within a stadium environment. It can also have an impact beyond the stadium, leveraging the power of sport to encourage acceptance of, and compliance with, tobacco control measures and smoking cessation campaigns in wider community settings.

## **Respect for smoke-free environments:**

There is now overwhelming support in European countries for smoke-free policies that apply to communal spaces, including football stadia. The incidence of smoke-free, and now tobacco-free, policies operating at football stadia is growing year by year, and in addition to the health and safety reasons offered above, such policies are backed up by the following trends:

- Overriding support for smoke-free policies in communal spaces, even amongst smokers themselves
- Smoking rates are going down across European countries each year, and there are considerably less smokers than smokers; according to WHO, in 2012 there were 40 countries in Europe where 70% of the adult population were non-smokers
- Smoke-free policies are in line with key governing bodies of sport such as UEFA, the IOC and FIFA
- Sponsors are increasingly interested in aligning their brands with organisations that promote a healthier environment and image.

**Further information:** To find out more about tobacco use and health in your country visit the Tobacco Control Database for the WHO European Region  
<http://data.euro.who.int/tobacco/>



## 2. Defining your tobacco control policy

**Minimum standard policy – ‘smoke-free’:** Decision makers should be made aware that a smoke-free stadium policy is the minimum standard for safety and comfort in European stadia. Best-practice smoke-free policy means a complete ban on smoking in *all areas of the stadium which should apply to all stadium users* with no exemptions.

### **Smoke-free policy definition:**

- A complete ban on smoking within the stadium past a defined point demarking the stadium perimeter (commonly the turnstile entrance)
- To include: all enclosed and open stands, thoroughfares, corporate hospitality, media facilities, pitch-side facilities, queuing areas, eating areas, toilets, VIP areas, changing rooms, offices, mix zones and official venue vehicles
- No use of internal designated smoking areas.

### **Gold standard policy – ‘tobacco free’:**

Also applying to all indoor and outdoor areas of the stadium, a tobacco-free policy also prohibits the sale and promotion of all tobacco and nicotine products. This tobacco control policy is one that has been adopted by governing bodies of football, such as UEFA, which applies a tobacco-free policy at Champions League, Europa League and EURO competition finals.

### **Tobacco-free policy definition:**

- No use of external designated smoking areas
- A ban on the sale of tobacco products within the perimeter of the stadium
- A ban on tobacco advertising, and the promotion or sponsorship of tobacco products or companies within the stadium
- A ban on the sale and use of oral tobacco products e.g. Snus
- A ban on lighters, matches and ashtrays within the perimeter of stadia
- A ban on the sale, use and promotion of e-cigarette products.

If gold standard policy is too ambitious, it may be easiest for clubs and stadia operators to commit to a good practice ‘smoke-free’ policy and then move progressively towards a best-practice ‘tobacco-free’ policy. Both smoke-free and tobacco-free policies should apply to all users of the stadium, including fans, staff, VIPs and match officials.

### **Why are these items part of a gold-standard policy?**

#### **Designated smoking areas (DSA's):**

DSA's require additional time and resource of stadium staff; even if DSA's are placed in external areas, they reduce the protective value of the policy and compromise the dissociation of sports with tobacco.

**E-cigarettes:** The majority of e-cigarette products contain nicotine which is an addictive substance, whilst the long term safety to the health of individual users of e-cigarettes is not yet established.

Additionally, use of e-cigarettes can confound enforcement of a smoke-free policy; from a distance it is difficult for both stewards and fans to distinguish between e-cigarette devices from traditional cigarettes.



### 3. Developing the policy

Clubs and stadium operators should work in consultation and partnership with key stakeholders in order to initiate the process of adopting a tobacco-free stadium policy, including national football association, local health agencies, supporter liaison officers and local law enforcement agencies. It is important that the planning and implementation of a tobacco-free stadium policy is driven at executive and / or board level, and that all staff within a club / stadium organisation are kept up to date with progress and successes.

**Policy ownership:** Someone from a senior position should be designated as the policy holder. The policy holder is responsible for coordinating development of the policy and ensuring its implementation, monitoring and review process, working closely with senior staff from communications, facilities, security and human resources.

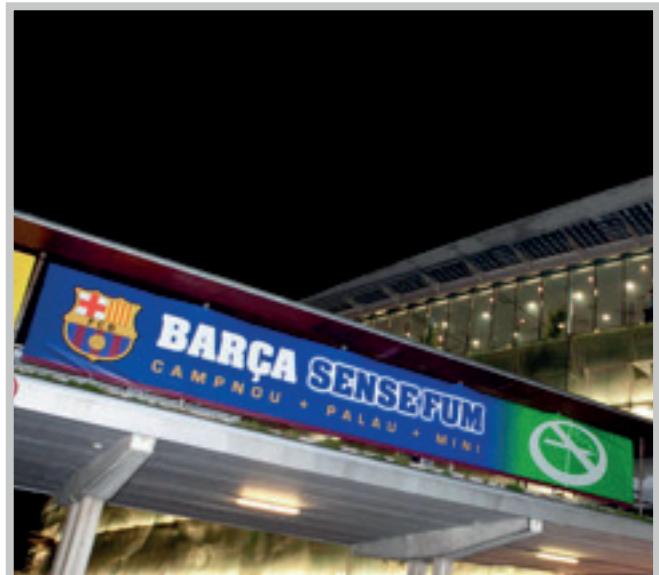
**Policy development:** The policy holder should work closely with senior staff from communications, marketing and facilities management departments to define the stadium tobacco control policy and communicate it to all stadium users. The stadium's tobacco control policy should be endorsed at board level.

**Exceeding tobacco legislation:** Sports clubs and stadia operators are responsible for the safety and security of all people in the stadium. They are legally bound to incorporate any national (and in some cases local) tobacco control law into their ground regulations, but are also *free to go beyond that law* if they wish to develop and enforce a more robust tobacco-free stadium policy. Even in countries where tobacco control laws are weak or do not apply to all areas of a stadium (e.g. open seating areas), *stadia operators have the right to go beyond legislation by integrating a strict smoke-free or tobacco-free policy into a stadium's ground regulations.*

There are many examples of ground regulations that exceed current law, and are put into place to ensure safety, security and respect within the stadium e.g. ban on the use of flares at matches or ban on use of homophobic or racist language.



**See Main Guide for:** FC Barcelona case study  
- example of a smoke-free stadium policy that goes beyond national tobacco control legislation



# 4. Communicating the policy

The policy holder should work closely with senior staff from communications, marketing and facilities management departments to define the chosen policy, and communicate this to all stadium users in advance of the policy coming into effect and on subsequent matchdays.

## **Developing a policy statement:**

The first step in communicating either a new or updated tobacco control policy is the development of a policy statement. This should include:

- What tobacco related activities are prohibited under the policy
- The primary health reasons why the policy is being adopted, including dangers of second-hand smoke and the acute dangers this presents to children
- What the policy prohibits, including use, sale and advertising of tobacco products
- Exactly where the policy covers within the stadium environment
- To whom the policy applies within the stadium and how there are no exemptions
- How the policy will be enforced and any penalties for non-compliance
- A commencement date for the policy and a point contact for further information.

➤ **See Main Guide for:** Template tobacco-free policy statement

**Communication planning:** Clubs and stadium management should develop a communications plan well in advance of the policy's commencement date that takes the following information and steps into account:

- Identify target audiences
- Establish a timeline to engage target audiences
- Develop key messages
- Establish communications channels to deliver key messages
- Host a press conference prior to the event.

**Communications tools:** There are a wide range of communications tools that can be used to promote a tobacco control policy to target audiences, in particular fans attending matches. Primary tools include:

- Policy statement:
  - In ground regulations
  - On club/stadium websites
  - Outside all entrances and/or turnstiles
  - On all match tickets
- Information card for distribution by stewards
- Public communication through website articles, social media
- Specific communication on the new policy to all season ticket holders and members
- Articles in the match-day programme, club magazine, and supporter magazines
- Disseminate the message through key stakeholders and communications channels.

➤ **See Main Guide for:** Example website article on tobacco-free policy from UEFA

## **Prohibited Articles not allowed into the ground**



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## 4. Communicating the policy (continued)

**No smoking signage:** Communications and facilities managers should consider the visual appearance, wording and placement of signage in advance of the policy coming in effect. An internationally recognised 'No Smoking' sign should be used. The sign should consist of a circular shape, with a black pictogram on a white background, red edging and a red diagonal line through the pictogram. As a minimum requirement, the no smoking sign should be accompanied with the wording 'No Smoking' in close proximity to the symbol.



➤ **See Main Guide for:** Template signage guide

**Signage placement:** No smoking signage should be placed in all key internal and external areas of a stadium, and specific consideration should be given to both the wording, frequency and size of signage to be used in likely 'hot spot' areas with higher levels of non-compliance e.g. toilets, catering areas.



A signage placement strategy should be developed based upon the layout and capacity of the stadium, starting at the point the tobacco control policy comes into effect (e.g. turnstile or perimeter gates).

We have developed a signage placement audit template to assist with this process.



**See Main Guide for:** Signage placement audit template

**Additional audio-visual communication devices within the stadium:** In addition to fixed signage, clubs and stadium operators should consider using the following audio-visual devices to assist in promoting the policy:

- Public address announcements both inside and outside the stadium
- Use of big screens or large electronic scoreboard
- Digital advertising boards (if applicable)
- Promotional posters displayed in key positions inside the stadium (e.g. catering areas and toilets) in advance of the policy coming into effect
- Incorporation of No Smoking symbol and wording into the uniform of stadium stewards and security staff.

# 5. Enforcing the policy

The policy holder should work closely with senior staff from facilities management, security and human resources departments to ensure the tobacco control policy is enforced effectively on matchdays and non-matchdays. The basis of a successful enforcement strategy is appropriate training of all members of clubs and stadium staff, but in particular stewards and security staff.

**General staff training:** It should be the responsibility of all club staff, including matchday event staff and any volunteers, to communicate the tobacco control policy in cases of non-compliance. Training of general club staff should be based upon the following:

- An education briefing involving all club and matchday staff prior to the policy coming into effect (approximately 4-6 weeks prior); this can take the form of a hard copy document outlining the policy's key facts, or a short e-learning course that can be delivered by departmental leads
- A 10 minute refresher 48 hours in advance of the policy's commencement, either as a standalone briefing or as part of the standard matchday briefing
- Staff updates on the successes and challenges in implementing the policy and any revisions needed.

**Steward and security training:** A short training programme of 30-45 minutes in length should be developed for all full and part-time security and stewarding staff to educate on the key details relating to the policy and the graduated response plan used to intervene with fans in cases of non-compliance. Training of staff should be in small groups, and based upon a slide presentation supervised by team or departmental managers. In addition to the slides, training should include role playing to help staff prepare for handling breaches and complaints, and leave staff with summary printed materials for further reference. We have developed an enforcement training module to assist with this process.

## Graduated response plan for breach of tobacco-free stadium policy:

A graduated response plan for instances of non-compliance should be documented and rehearsed in detail as part of steward and security training. The plan can include the following steps:

1. Any person using tobacco or e-cigarettes should be politely asked to stop by stewards and/or volunteers, and reminded about smoke-free policy operating at the stadium
2. If the user does not stop, an information card may be shown to the offending person with details of the policy and why this has been adopted to protect the health of fans and staff
3. If the offence still continues, a second and final verbal warning should be issued and if necessary reinforced by a senior steward or member of the security team who should warn about likely penalties for continued breach of the policy
4. If this final warning is also ignored, the offender can be removed from the stadium, and if supported by national legislation, handed to police for a potential penalty fine
5. Incidents of persistent non-compliance and ejection from stadium should always be officially logged by stadium management as part of a monitoring strategy.

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**See Main Guide for:**  
Enforcement training module

# 5. Enforcing the policy (continued)

**Monitoring smoking 'hot spots':** Incidents of smoking or use of e-cigarettes may occur anywhere within the stadium, but club and / or stadium management should plan ahead to monitor 'hot spot' areas of the stadium that are most likely to smoke at specific points during a match-day. Likely hot spot areas and times to plan for during a match include:

- At turnstile entrances (pre-match)
- Standard seating / standing areas (during match)
- Inside standard and disabled toilets and near to their entrances (both pre-match and half-time)
- Internal and external catering areas (pre-match and half-time)
- Within stadium walkways and stairwells (pre-match and half-time).

In addition to mobilising an adequate number of frontline staff to monitor hot spot areas of the stadium at key times during a match-day, facilities managers should make sure that any smoking cues such as ash trays and stub bins are permanently removed from the stadium, and that any disposable ash trays are prohibited under the tobacco-free policy.

## Communications tools for enforcement:

An effective communications tool to assist stewards and security in the enforcement of the policy is a set of information cards explaining the policy to fans, and the health benefits associated with it. A yellow card can be used to explain what the tobacco-free policy prohibits, where this applies and the health benefits of a tobacco-free stadium. A red card can be used to explain that incidents of continuous non-compliance with the policy will result in an official warning from security, and ultimately ejection from the stadium. If covered by national legislation, warning of a financial penalty may also be included.

➤ **See Main Guide for:** Template yellow and red cards for enforcement

**Penalties:** The issuing of a penalty in cases of persistent non-compliance is a helpful tool as part of an enforcement strategy. Usually the simple warning of being ejected from the stadium or a potential fine is enough warning to prevent offenders who continue to smoke, but there may be occasions when penalties need to be issued, in particular during the early stages of a new tobacco control policy.

The type of penalty that can be issued will depend upon national or local tobacco legislation, but clubs and stadium management are in a position to eject fans from the stadium in cases of persistent non-compliance as part of the stadium's ground regulations. The most common penalties for instances of non-compliance include:

- Ejection from stadium
- Ejection from stadium and loss of season ticket / club membership / refusal of future entry (to be used for cases of repeat offending)
- Ejection from stadium and potential financial fine in accordance with local / national tobacco legislation.



# 6. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the policy

The policy holder should work with senior staff from security and facilities management departments to develop a robust process monitoring framework that can be applied to both matchday and non-matchday operations. The monitoring process will help to identify any key operational problems and areas for improvement, and help determine the overall impact of the policy.

**Monitoring form:** A simple-to-use monitoring form should be developed for use by stewards and security detailing instances of non-compliance, and any additional indicators relating to smoking. The monitoring form should attempt to capture information on:

- Number of incidents of people seen to be smoking within the stadium, where this has taken place and at what time
- Number of incidents of continuous non-compliance that have resulted in a warning from stewards or security, where this has taken place and at what time
- Number of incidents that have resulted in a penalty being issued, the nature of the penalty, where this has taken place and at what time
- Visual evidence of tobacco-related smoke, where in the stadium this is and at what time it was detected
- Visual evidence of tobacco paraphernalia, including cigarette ends and tobacco packaging
- Any abusive behaviour towards staff concerning enforcement of the tobacco control policy.

**Incident log book:** It is advised that a specific log book relating to incidents of non-compliance with the tobacco-free policy is maintained by management for at least the first two years of the policy coming into effect, capturing information on breaches of the policy on match-days and also non-match-days.

**Policy review:** During the first year of the policy, it is important to review the scope and level of success of the policy on a regular basis, at least every 2-3 months, with a mid-season and annual review of the policy in subsequent years. It is advised that an initial review of the policy and its level of compliance is conducted immediately after the first match to address any unanticipated problems.

**Updating the policy:** Any permanent or temporary modifications to the stadium's structure or operations should be considered in a review of the policy. Clubs and stadia operators should be aware of any new trends affecting the policy (e.g. the emergence of e-cigarettes) and consult with stakeholders and public health agencies on how to respond to such developments.

➤ **See Main Guide for:** Template monitoring form enforcement

## Further information and support

We strongly advise that clubs, stadium operators and governing bodies of sport consult the in-depth version of this guide and liaise with suitable partner agencies before starting to plan the implementation of a tobacco control policy.

Further resources are available at:  
[www.healthystadia.eu/tobacco/guidance](http://www.healthystadia.eu/tobacco/guidance)

**Healthy Stadia is very happy to assist stakeholders with policy development and any related enquiries.**

**Please contact us at:**

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