

Howard County's Smoke-Free Parks Fact Sheet

SMOKE-FREE PARKS POLICY

- Howard County has a strong and ongoing commitment to protecting and improving the health of its residents, employees, and visitors. We are the healthiest county in the state, and we are dedicated to doing all we can to improve our community's health.
- It is especially important that we ensure the health of the environments most frequented by children and adults - parks and recreational areas, schools and other learning environments, workplaces, and restaurants. We know that behavior and environment are closely linked, and therefore we need to send a clear and consistent message about healthy living.
- Howard County is the first county in Maryland with a total ban on smoking in public parks and recreational areas. Five other counties restrict (not ban) tobacco use in outdoor parks, recreation areas, at organized activities, and in public common areas.
- Quit Today: Anyone who *lives or works* in Howard County can enroll in the Health Department's FREE smoking cessation program. Call 410-313-6265 or [click here](#) for more information.

ENVIRONMENTAL & ECONOMIC COSTS

- There are economic and environmental costs to the state and local community as a result of secondhand smoke exposure.
- In 2009 Maryland's direct expenditures on medical care attributable to smoking and smoking-related events totaled \$2.2 billion.
- Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter. Almost 80% of cigarette butts wind up in human water systems. Ingestion of cigarette debris can cause illness and death among animals. The ones that don't cost money to clean-up.
- Smoking-related materials are a fire risk – especially in dry months.

THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF TOBACCO USE & SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE

- While Howard County is the healthiest county in the state, part of our vision as a model public health community is to identify local health needs and gaps. Our local rates of obesity and overweight among children, youth, and adults and levels of physical activity among adults demand targeted and localized prevention efforts.
- Howard County has the benefit of a model parks and recreation system. We also work to promote active living and healthy behaviors about the health risks of smoking and secondhand smoke exposure.
- Tobacco-related illness is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States [Including: chronic lung disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke, in addition to cancer of the lungs, larynx, esophagus, and mouth.]
- The prevalence of tobacco use among U.S. adults is 17% nationally, 15% in Maryland, and 10% in Howard County.
- In 2007, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) categorizes secondhand smoke as a Group A human carcinogen.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke causes death and disease among nonsmoking adults and children [Including: coronary heart disease, respiratory infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis among babies and toddlers, exacerbates childhood asthma, increases risk of sudden infant death (SIDS) and chronic ear infections.]
- Both indoor and outdoor exposure to secondhand smoke pose a health risk to the public.
- Numerous studies have measured lower rates of hospital admissions for acute myocardial infarction (AMI), or heart attacks, following the implementation of local smoking bans. The Pueblo Heart Study found that the comprehensive municipal ordinance that made all workplaces and public places smoke-free as of July 1, 2003 in the City of Pueblo, Colorado, resulted in sustained reductions in heart attack admissions over a 3-year period. There was a total reduction in AMI hospital admissions of 40% between the pre-implementation period and the 3 year post-implementation period.
- In addition to protecting nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure, smoke-free laws and smoke-free workplace policies help smokers quit.

PARKS & RECREATION IN HOWARD COUNTY

- There are 7,000+ acres of award-winning and nationally-recognized parks and scenic public spaces in Howard County.
- Parks are one of Howard County's greatest assets and valuable public spaces. They also play an important health in promoting and preserving the health of County residents and visitors from around the region and state.
- The mission of Howard County Parks and Recreation is to provide opportunities to pursue safe and enjoyable leisure activities in balance with the protection and conservation of natural resources. We encourage Howard County residents and visitors to "Get Up! Get Out! and Get Active!"
- The smoke-free parks policy is important for the health of County residents, visitors and wildlife. As an example, Centennial Park – where we are today - has won awards for its natural design and sensitivity to nature. The 337-acre park features a spectacular 54-acre, man-made lake, which is stocked by the State Department of Fisheries, and is home to a variety of wildlife such as white-tailed deer, beavers, foxes, turtles, herons, and many other bird species.

County Executive of Howard County, Maryland

Executive Order: 2011-06

Dated: July 13, 2011

**Subject: Prohibition Against Smoking
On All County Park Property**

WHEREAS, tobacco use causes death and disease and continues to be an urgent public health challenge, as evidenced by the following:

- Tobacco-related illness is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States,¹ accounting for about 443,000 deaths each year;² and
- Scientific studies have concluded that tobacco use can cause chronic lung disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke, in addition to cancer of the lungs, larynx, esophagus, and mouth;³ and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke;⁴ and

WHEREAS, exposure to secondhand smoke causes death and disease, as evidenced by the following:

- Secondhand smoke is responsible for as many as 73,000 deaths among nonsmokers each year in the United States;⁵ and
- Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of coronary heart disease by approximately thirty percent;⁶ and

1 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Targeting Tobacco Use: The Nation's Leading Cause of Preventable Death*. 2008, p. 2. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/pdf/osh.pdf.

2 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses — United States, 2000-2004." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 57(45): 1226-1228, 2008. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5745a3.htm.

3 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Targeting Tobacco Use: The Nation's Leading Cause of Preventable Death*. 2008, p. 2. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/pdf/osh.pdf.

4 US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. 2007. Report highlights available at: www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/factsheets/factsheet7.html.

5 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Fact Sheet – Secondhand Smoke*. 2006. Available at: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm.

6 Barnoya J and Glantz S. "Cardiovascular Effects of Secondhand Smoke: Nearly as Large as Smoking."

- Secondhand smoke exposure causes lower respiratory tract infections, such as pneumonia and bronchitis, in as many as 300,000 children in the United States under the age of 18 months each year,⁷ and also exacerbates childhood asthma;⁸ and

WHEREAS, exposure to secondhand smoke anywhere has negative health impacts, and exposure to secondhand smoke does occur at significant levels outdoors, as evidenced by the following:

- Levels of secondhand smoke exposure outdoors can reach levels attained indoors depending on direction and amount of wind and number and proximity of smokers;⁹ and
- Irritation from secondhand smoke begins at levels as low as 4 micrograms per cubic meter, and in some outdoor situations this level can be found as far away as 13 feet from the burning cigarette;¹⁰ and

WHEREAS, cigarette butts pose a health threat to young children, as evidenced by the following:

- In 2004, American poison control centers received nearly 8,000 reports of children poisoned by the ingestion of cigarettes, cigarette butts, and other tobacco products;¹¹ and
- Children who ingest cigarette butts can experience vomiting, nausea, lethargy, and gagging;¹² and

Circulation, 111: 2684-2698, 2005. Available at: www.circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/111/20/2684.

7 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Targeting Tobacco Use: The Nation's Leading Cause of Preventable Death*. 2008, p. 2. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/aag/pdf/osh.pdf.

8 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Fact Sheet – Secondhand Smoke*. 2006. Available at: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm.

9 Klepeis NE, Ott WR, and Switzer P. *Real-Time Monitoring of Outdoor Environmental Tobacco Smoke Concentrations: A Pilot Study*. San Francisco: University of California, San Francisco and Stanford University, 2004, p. 34, 80. Available at: http://exposurescience.org/pub/reports/Outdoor_ETS_Final.pdf; See also Klepeis NE, Ott WR and Switzer P. “Real-Time Measurement of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Particles.” *Journal of Air and Waste Management Association*, 57: 522-534, 2007. Available at: www.ashaust.org.au/pdfs/OutdoorSHS0705.pdf.

10 Junker MH, Danuser B, Monn C, et al. “Acute Sensory Responses of Nonsmokers at Very Low Environmental Tobacco Smoke Concentrations in Controlled Laboratory Settings.” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 109(10): 1046-1052, 2001. Available at: www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1242082&blobtype=pdf; Repace JL. “Benefits of Smoke-Free Regulations in Outdoor Settings: Beaches, Golf Courses, Parks, Patios, and in Motor Vehicles.” *William Mitchell Law Review*, 34(4): 1621-1638, 2008. Available at: <http://tobacco.health.usyd.edu.au/site/supersite/contact/pdfs/WilliamMitchellRepace.pdf>.

11 American Association of Poison Control Centers. *2004 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers Toxic Exposure Surveillance System*. Elsevier Inc., 2004, p. 645. Available at: www.poison.org/prevent/documents/TESS%20Annual%20Report%202004.pdf.

12 US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Ingestion of Cigarettes and Cigarette Butts by Children – Rhode Island, January 1994-July 1996.” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 46(06): 125-128, 1997. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046181.htm.

WHEREAS, in light of the overwhelming evidence demonstrating the inherent risks of exposure to secondhand smoke, even outdoors, it is in the best interest of the public's safety that such exposure be eliminated to the fullest extent possible.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND PROCLAIMED by the County Executive of Howard County, Maryland, that, under the authority granted by the Charter and Laws of Howard County, Maryland, that, in accordance with Section 12-601(t) of the Howard County Code, Smoking is defined as the act of smoking, inhaling smoke from a hookah or water pipe, or carrying a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, bidi of any kind, or any lighted tobacco or lighting tobacco or lighting a cigar, cigarette, pipe, bidi, or any kind, or tobacco of any kind; and it is further

ORDERED, that in accordance with Section 19-201(f) of the Howard County Code, Park Property means real and personal property which Howard County owns in fee simple or in which it holds a leasehold or easement interest and which is managed by the Department for the use and benefit of the public for recreation, the protection of wildlife habitats, or the protection of natural, scenic, or historical resources. Park property includes, without limitation, a County park, County pathway, open space property purchased by or dedicated to the County, vegetation, soil, water, wildlife, a building or structure and its contents, a sign, improvement, fixture, equipment, monument, historic artifact, statue, vehicle, or a boundary survey marker or monument; and it is further

ORDERED, that in accordance with Sections 19-209(b), *Detrimental to Natural Resources and Ecosystem*, of the Howard County Code, it is clear that Smoking is an activity that is extremely harmful to human health and therefore to public safety; and it is therefore

ORDERED that Smoking is prohibited on all Howard County Park Property; and is further

ORDERED, that in accordance with Section 19-208, *Regulation of Conduct*, of the Howard County Code, anyone Smoking on any Howard County Park Property shall be asked to cease smoking or leave the premises immediately; and it is further

ORDERED THAT:

1. This Order shall take effect immediately; and
2. This Order shall be promptly publicized.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Ken Ulman, as County Executive of Howard County, Maryland, have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Howard County to be affixed this 13th day of July, 2011.

Ken Ulman
County Executive

Give a gift to yourself and your family.....



Quit Smoking Today!!!

The Howard County Health Department offers
FREE smoking cessation classes.

- 7 week program
- 1 session per week
- Each session lasts 60 minutes
- Free medication support
(must be 18 or older to receive medication)
- Open to anyone who lives or works in Howard County

Sign Up Today!

- Call **410-313-6265** to register
- Space is limited; reserve your spot now

