Smoke-Free at Work

Benefits of A Smoke-Free Workplace

The Smoke-Free Workplace has clear benefits for both the employer and the employee:

Benefits for Employers

Employers bear both the direct and indirect costs as a result of employees smoking.
A smoke-free workplace has the potential to provide both health and financial benefits, including:

- Reduced risk of sickness and absenteeism.

- Protection of non-smokers from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and consequently, a reduced risk of litigation.

- Reduced cleaning costs.

- Reduced risk of fires and potential reduction in insurance premiums.

- Increased productivity – no hidden smoking breaks.

- Reduced risk of losing employees through premature death or early retirement.

- Improved morale, as employers demonstrate the importance of a healthy workplace.

- Enhanced corporate image.

Benefits for Employees

- Improved health and well being for both smokers and non-smokers.
- Reduced exposure to second-hand smoke for all employees and consequently, a reduced risk of cancer, heart disease and respiratory problems in adults and children.
- Promotion of a healthier, cleaner work environment.
- Improved morale as the organisation is seen to care for the welfare of employees.
- Provision of a supportive environment for those trying to quit.

Benefits of a Smoke-Free Workplace

Employees are much more likely to quit smoking in a workplace that is completely smoke-free, as opposed to one with designated smoking areas.

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Why a Smoke-Free Workplace

This important public health measure is about allowing people to work and socialise in a clean and healthy smoke-free environment. Over the last 20 years, there has been growing scientific evidence, internationally, that second-hand smoke is harmful to health.

The World Health Organisation International Agency for Cancer Research has declared that second-hand smoke is a known human carcinogen, or cancer-causing agent.

In Ireland, a report commissioned by the Health and Safety Authority and the Office of Tobacco Control - 'The Health Effects of Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) in the Workplace' concluded that exposure to ETS, or second-hand smoke, causes lung cancer, other cancers and other serious and fatal illnesses, including heart disease and respiratory problems in adults and children.

Although the purpose of the legislation is to protect staff in the workplace from second-hand smoke, evidence from other countries shows that it will contribute to the reduction in the prevalence of smoking.

The latest National Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition (Slán) reveals a drop of four percent in smoking rates over the last five years in Ireland to 27% today.
As seven out of ten smokers want to quit, it is anticipated that a smoke-free work place will provide a supportive environment for employees trying to quit.