

St. Lawrence County Tobacco Free Grounds Law

FAQ (Frequency Asked Questions)

Q: What does tobacco-free mean?

A: The use of tobacco products of any kind will be prohibited on all property owned, operated, or leased by St. Lawrence County.

Q: What is considered a tobacco product and therefore prohibited by the law?

A: Tobacco Product means any manufactured product containing tobacco or nicotine, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, dipping tobacco, bidis, snus, dissolvable tobacco products, and electronic cigarette cartridges. However, "Tobacco Product" does not include any product that has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, pursuant to its authority over drugs and devices, for sale as a tobacco use cessation product or for other medical purposes and is being marketed and sold solely for that approved purpose.

Q: Do employees or visitors have to quit using tobacco products?

A: No. This law simply means that tobacco use is not allowed on property owned, operated, or leased by St. Lawrence County.

Q: What is the County doing to help employees manage their cravings while on the grounds for extended periods of time?

A: To help employees manage cravings the Human Resources Department has negotiated a discounted rate on traditional nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products through Kinney Drugs pharmacy. County employees should have received an updated "Kinney Prescription Card" in the mail which can be used to receive the 10% discount. Examples of NRT include the patch, gum, and lozenge.

Q: What is the County doing to help visitors manage their cravings while on the grounds for extended periods of time?

Unfortunately we are not able to provide direct assistance to members of the general public due to cost constraints. We suggest you talk to your primary care provider to determine the option that is best for you.

Q: Can I use tobacco in my personal vehicle while on county grounds?

A: There was a lengthy discussion surrounding this issue with input from the Board of Health and other advisors. Ultimately it was determined that a blanket exemption for personal vehicles would undermine the intent and integrity of the law, which is to promote the health and well being of the people of St. Lawrence County. The only vehicle related exemption reads as follows: *"The provisions of this local law shall not apply to the following: A privately owned*

moving motor vehicle which is not engaged in county service and which is in the process of exiting or entering real property owned or leased by St. Lawrence County.”

Q: Are there other counties with tobacco-free grounds laws?

A: Yes. There are nine other counties in NYS that have enacted similar laws. Those counties include: Cattaraugus, Clinton, Livingston, Madison, Oneida, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca and Ulster.

Q: What is St. Lawrence County doing to help employees who want to quit using tobacco products?

A: SLC offers a number of resources to help employees who want to quit using tobacco products. The county health plan describes the benefit as follows: “Prescription Drugs used for the purpose of smoking cessation are covered under the Plan subject to the prior authorization of their use. A course of treatment is available once a lifetime for covered enrollees and shall not exceed a 180 day supply of the prescription drug.” Additionally, the Human Resources Department has negotiated a discounted rate on traditional nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products through Kinney Drugs pharmacy. County employees should have received an updated “Kinney Prescription Card” in the mail which can be used to receive the 10% discount. Examples of NRT include the patch, gum, and lozenge. We will also be scheduling group tobacco cessation classes in the near future. If you have questions about resources please feel free to contact Ben Todd at btodd@stlawco.org or 229-3432.

Q: I am interested in tobacco treatment resources, but I am not a SLC employee. What resources are available to me?

A: SLC values the health and well-being of everyone who uses our facilities. If you use tobacco products and would like to quit, you should discuss options with your physician or other health care provider. A variety of resources to help stop using tobacco can be found at <http://www.nysmokefree.com/default.aspx>. You may also contact any of the local hospitals to inquire about tobacco cessation programs. If you have questions about resources please feel free to contact Ben Todd at btodd@stlawco.org or 229-3432.

Q: Why are e-cigarettes included in this law?

A: There is still a great deal of research being done on the e-cigarette. At this point in time e-cigarettes cannot be considered a safe alternative to other tobacco products. Additionally, these products have not been approved by the FDA as cessation tools.

Q: How will the tobacco-free law be enforced?

A: It is our hope that the citizens of St. Lawrence County will recognize that all laws are in place for the good of the general public and will act accordingly. If there is consistent disregard for this law (or any county law) by an individual they may be subject to a public nuisance violation punishable by a fine of up to \$50- first offense, and \$100- second offense.

Q: I live near a County road. Does that mean I can't use tobacco on my own property?

A: No. The tobacco free law exempts all county roadways.

Q: I like to walk in the county forest near my house. Am I no longer able to use tobacco in the woods?

A: There is an exemption for county forest land in the new law. The only areas covered would be trails that are meant for public use. Reminder: If you choose to smoke or use smokeless tobacco on county forestland (or any wooded areas) please do so responsibly and not discard tobacco refuse carelessly. Not only is this litter detrimental to the environment, but it is also a common cause of forest fires.