



Smoke-free work environment

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. All nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing* have a right to perform their work in an environment that is safe and without risks to health from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke
2. All workplaces, including outdoor areas, should be smoke-free as there is no safe level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.
3. Smoking is a fire hazard, and most work environments contain furniture, fittings, paper products, chemicals and gases that are flammable, and as such smoking is a hazard on many levels.
4. Chemicals produced during the combustion of tobacco have the ability to absorb into the surfaces of natural and synthetic materials. There is growing evidence that this 'third hand' exposure to cigarette smoke is also potentially hazardous to health.
5. It is the responsibility of governments to:
 - a) legislate for and enforce smoke-free work environments;
 - b) promote the benefits of smoke-free work environments;
 - c) provide assistance to agencies to disseminate educational material about the hazards of smoking; and
 - d) assist employers to support nurses, midwives, assistants in nursing and the people for whom they provide care to cease smoking.
6. It is the responsibility of employers to:
 - a) develop, implement and review policies, systems of work and facilities to provide and maintain a smoke-free work environment, in consultation with workers and their health and safety representatives;
 - b) implement a program aimed at achieving a smoke-free workplace, which includes:
 - i. a smoke-free environment policy;
 - ii. ensuring that all staff, people receiving care and visitors adhere to the smoke-free policy and are not permitted to smoke within the boundaries of the workplace, unless an exemption exists for that workplace;
 - iii. an educational awareness program to encourage staff and people receiving care to stop or reduce smoking;
 - iv. clear advice to staff, people receiving care and visitors that the workplace is smoke-free;

*The term assistant in nursing also refers to care workers (however titled)



- v. clear implementation and enforcement of smoke-free workplace policies, without a requirement on nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing to enforce the policy; and
- vi. no facility selling or providing tobacco products.
- c) prominently display and publicise the 'smoke-free policy' so that nurses, midwives, assistants in nursing, people receiving care and visitors are adequately informed about the policy, the risks of passive smoking and the penalties that could be applied for breaches;
- d) consider and advise how the policy will be implemented and enforced, without a requirement on health care staff to enforce the policy;
- e) provide information on the smoke-free policy to people planning admission, and provide smoking cessation information for smokers;
- f) provide nicotine replacement therapy for people-as part of their care;
- g) use signage to indicate a smoke-free workplace for the benefit of people receiving care, staff, visitors, service users and providers;
- h) ensure that the position of people receiving care in inpatient or residential care regarding smoking and lifestyle does not impinge upon:
 - i. the rights of nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing or other persons to a smoke-free environment and employer's duties under relevant laws to provide a healthy and safe work environment for workers, people receiving care and other persons; and
 - ii. ensure that if people receiving care wish to smoke, this is done in a designated outdoor smoking area with appropriate controls in place to minimise risks to workers and others;
- i) provide information to people receiving home based care regarding no smoking around nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing;
- j) recognise that smokers required to cease smoking may experience withdrawal symptoms and require the support of colleagues and management;
- k) ensure nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing are not put at risk of second hand smoke in facilities that do not comply with smoke-free workplaces. Smokers in these facilities should only be permitted to smoke in designated areas within a safe and secure environment that does not present a risk to nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing or others.
- l) encourage and offer assistance to nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing by sponsoring attendance at courses and provision of interventions which assist smokers to manage nicotine dependence and cease smoking with paid time off;
- m) provide cost-price nicotine replacement therapy for staff to assist them to not smoke and encourage quitting.



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- n) provide facilities and resources for health promotion activities related to smoking cessation and the effects of passive smoking;
 - o) provide adequate disposal facilities for cigarette ash and butts at facility perimeter to encourage smoke-free environment;
 - p) advise all job applicants of the smoke-free policy with which all employees must comply;
 - q) equip the Health and Safety Advisory Committee to address WHS related aspects of the smoke-free policy; and
 - r) ensure no tobacco or accessories are sold in health, aged care or community health facilities;
7. It is the responsibility of nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing to:
- a) familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the smoke-free policy of the employing facility; and
 - b) support colleagues and people receiving care to cease smoking.
8. It is the responsibility of nurses and midwives to facilitate the availability of appropriate literature, programs and counselling to assist smokers to cease smoking.

*Adopted by Federal Council December 1993
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