

FLORIDA OUTDOOR SHARED SPACES

SMOKEFREE POLICIES CAN HELP
OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT.



The Florida Clean Air Act was first passed in 1985 and adjusted over time to protect public health.



The recent update to Florida's seminal Florida Clean Air Act, "The Regulation of Smoking by Counties and Municipalities Act", allows local governments to enact policies to restrict smoking in outdoor shared spaces they own and operate, such as public beaches and community parks.



This change allows local leaders to set policies tailored to their communities rather than a statewide policy covering both Florida's smallest towns and biggest cities.



Communities can also set policies regarding the use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products in public places. Only unfiltered cigars are specifically omitted from the new local enforcement.



Since the law took effect July 1, 2022, many cities and counties across Florida have already begun to discuss how smokefree public places could help reduce a major source of toxic litter and how restrictions on tobacco use in places where kids play could keep young people from ever starting to use these products.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Are cigarette butts found on the beach often?

For over 30 years, cigarette butts have been the most commonly found item in Ocean Conservancy's annual Florida beach cleanup. Florida communities today spend thousands of dollars each week collecting thousands of cigarettes from public places. This toxic waste product was encountered more than all the straws and stirrers, cans, glass bottles and plastic grocery bags combined.



How do cigarette butts impact the environment?

Cigarettes are not biodegradable, and the plastics and toxic chemicals in cigarettes and their filters can be harmful if they enter the water supply. Cigarette butts can also be ingested by curious children, pets, or marine life mistaking the litter for food.



Is e-cigarette waste a problem?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists "nicotine & salts", the chemicals found in e-cigarette cartridges and disposable devices, as an "acute hazardous waste." Lithium-ion batteries, which are found in rechargeable e-cigarettes, are not only hazardous waste, but have also been known to explode and catch fire.



Will smokefree shared spaces negatively impact tourism?

Smokefree public policies can help support the economy by increasing tourism due to clean, pristine beaches. Litter free beaches are cited as an important decision-making factor when choosing a vacation destination. With thousands of public parks and hundreds of beaches across the country with smokefree policies, clean and smokefree beaches will become increasingly more important for Florida's visitors.



What is the local impact of smokefree beaches and parks?

Smokefree shared space policies change the social norms surrounding tobacco and prevent people, including teens, from starting to smoke. When communities introduce smokefree policies, they also reduce the risk of exposure to secondhand smoke, which is associated with thousands of deaths each year. Spaces like beaches and parks are part of promoting a healthy, active lifestyle. Smoking bans in public places have been found to directly and significantly reduce the number of hospital admissions with cardiac events such as heart attacks.