

TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Effective January 1, 2002, our agency is implementing a policy that will require that newly hired individuals be Tobacco Free.

Our reasons for moving to a hiring practice of non-smokers only are simple:

(1) Economics

- Employers spend an average of \$753 per year more in medical costs for a smoker than for a non-smoker. Additionally, \$68 billion dollars in medical costs are spent in the United States for tobacco deaths alone.

(2) Productivity

- Smokers miss an average of two more workdays per year than their non-smoking colleagues do.
- Smoking accounts for a total annual value of lost productivity and disability time worth \$47 billion dollars per year in the United States.

(3) Prevention & Objective

- Our tobacco prevention campaign is one of our primary departmental objectives. It is important that we demonstrate healthy behaviors by our actions and through our policies, and that we educate and market our tobacco prevention efforts to our Pierce County community.
- Our US Surgeon General, David Satcher stated that "Tobacco use will remain the leading cause of preventable illness and death in this Nation ... until tobacco prevention and control efforts are commensurate with the harm caused by tobacco use."

Social norms are changing and employers cannot continue to bear the escalating cost associated with tobacco use. Therefore, employees will be expected to demonstrate healthy behaviors with regard to tobacco use. Hence, it will be a condition of their employment to be tobacco free upon hire and to remain tobacco free during their employment with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department.