

Smoke Free Outdoor Recreation and Sport Areas

The time is right...

Motion M99-2008-04 was carried at the recent Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) board meeting. This motion reads:

MNL fully supports the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco in its campaign to have all indoor and OUTDOOR recreational facilities designated smoke-free.

Indoor recreational facilities in Municipalities across our Province have been designated smoke free areas for some time now. Research clearly indicates that secondhand smoke is making people sick and in some cases leading to premature death. In 2006, the Surgeon General released a report indicating that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. The time is now right to address the presence of secondhand smoke in all OUTDOOR recreation and sport areas and events.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT), asks each municipality to follow the lead of MNL and consider adopting a policy declaring all municipal outdoor recreation and sport areas and events to be smoke-free.

A policy such as this does not need to be long and complicated. For example, the town of Portugal Cove - St. Philip's recently approved a policy which states that there is to be no smoking at all outdoor town facilities with the exception of parking lots. Any individuals smoking in parking lots must remain a minimum of 10 meters away from all doors, entryways and walkways. Each municipality has different needs. The key is to clearly state in the policy which outdoor areas are to be included i.e. sports fields, walking trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, entrances to both indoor and outdoor sport facilities etc.

To support municipalities as they move forward with this important health policy, ACT has developed a brochure highlighting the need for smoke free outdoor areas. To receive brochures, simply email a copy of the new policy to kevincoady@atnf.com and we will ensure that brochures are sent to you.

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador has endorsed smoke-free outdoor recreation and sport areas and events. The Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association has declared that soccer is now a smoke-free sport. Our schools have declared their properties to be smoke-free. The time is right for each municipality to support these groups and protect the health and well being of everyone in the community from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

