

Beaufort County News Release

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH AREA | COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY DEPARTMENT

Contact:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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No Smoking: All Beaufort County Campuses Are Now Smoke-Free

Beaufort County's [updated smoking ordinance](#) went into effect today, prohibiting smoking at all County-owned or operated campuses and facilities.

"By eliminating smoking from our campuses, we're inviting more of the public to enjoy their campuses in the clean and healthy manner they deserve," said Deputy County Administrator Josh Gruber.

County Council voted this past November to approve the updated smoking ordinance, which went into effect today.

"It's a combination of good practice, good leadership and public awareness," said Beaufort County Administrator Gary Kubic. "We hope to send a message that Beaufort County cares about the well-being of its employees and residents."

The smoking ordinance is accompanied by a program to assist employees and residents with quitting smoking.

"We're committed to doing all that we can to assist our employees who are on the journey to quit smoking," said Gruber. "Our hope is that the resources we provide will allow individuals to replace a negative habit with a positive one."

For employees who plan to quit smoking, the County is offering the Freedom From Smoking program, an eight-week smoking cessation course that will address different aspects of the quitting process each week and includes stress management techniques, education on craving and weight control while quitting.

The program, designed by the American Lung Association, is led by Beaufort Memorial Hospital and the Beaufort County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department's Prevention team.

Freedom From Smoking is offered to Beaufort County employees at no cost and is available to all other Beaufort County residents for \$30. All participants will have access to the LifeFit Wellness Center for two months at no cost.

To register for the Freedom From Smoking Program, please call Alexa DeFeo at 843-522-2270 or email adefeo@bmhsc.org. The classes are open to anyone who is ready to quit smoking.

The Beaufort County Facility Management Department will be placing signage and stickers at Beaufort County campuses to remind employees and the public that all Beaufort County campuses are 100% smoke-free.

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The County's Communications and Accountability Department has launched the [#SmokeFreeBC](#) campaign to encourage employees and residents who want to quit smoking through video clips, inspirational photos, graphics and testimonials.

[A smoke-free public service announcement video](#), produced by Beaufort County's Broadcast Services Department, is now available online and will air on The County Channel next week.



"We are one of the top employers in the County and we feel it is our duty to create a healthier environment for our employees and residents," said Beaufort County Administrator Gary Kubic. "The smoke-free initiative is part of a series of steps the County is taking to promote a healthier Beaufort County."

In addition to the smoke-free initiative, the County is offering healthy lifestyle resources to its employees, including granting access to the workout facilities and swimming pools at the [Buckwalter and Burton Wells Recreation Centers](#) at no cost to all Beaufort County employees and their immediate families.

An FAQ is [included below](#) and will be displayed on the County's website.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is Beaufort County banning tobacco smoke from its facilities?

A: At Beaufort County, our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment and to decrease health risks for our employees and visitors.

Q: What assistance and/or cessation services will Beaufort County provide?

A: Beaufort County staff can take advantage of the Freedom From Smoking program provided by Beaufort County and Beaufort Memorial Hospital. The eight-week program will be offered at no cost to staff. During the eight-week program, participants will have access to LifeFit Wellness Center at Beaufort Memorial Hospital. All staff can participate in exercise and recreational activities at any County Parks and Leisure Services (PALS) facility at no cost.

Q: What does a smoke-free campus policy entail?

A: A smoke-free policy prohibits the use of any smoke-emitting tobacco products on all Beaufort County property. Please read the [full policy here](#).

Q: Is this policy only for Beaufort County employees? What about residents?

A: All individuals, including employees, volunteers, residents, visitors and contractors who work in or visit Beaufort County buildings, parking lots, parks and grounds.

Q: Is smoking allowed in cars?

A: No. Smoking is prohibited on all areas of Beaufort County property, including inside cars parked or while driving in parking lots.

Q: When will the smoking ordinance go into effect?

A: Effective March 1, 2017, all Beaufort County campuses will be 100% smoke-free.

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Q: Why don't you create designated smoking areas?

A: Secondhand smoke poses high-level health risks to adults and children. We do not want our residents to be exposed to secondhand smoke.

Q: What about e-cigarettes?

A: E-cigarettes are prohibited. The ordinance bans "smoking", which is defined by inhaling, exhaling, burning, lighting or carrying a lighted cigarette, e-cigarette, cigar, pipe, device or any other lighted inhalable product.

Q: Why was smoking selected as the health risk to address at this time?

A: Cigarette smoking has been identified as the number one source of preventable disease and illness.

Q: How will the policy be enforced?

A: The policy's success will depend heavily on the cooperation of employees and residents. Beaufort County reserves the right to initiate disciplinary procedures against employees found to be in violation of the policy. Any person in violation of the policy can be fined. A detailed outline of penalties can be found on p. 3 of [the ordinance](#).

