



Parks-wide Smoking Ban: Frequently Asked Questions

Can I smoke anywhere in a park?

No. The new ban prohibits smoking in all publically accessible places under Seattle Parks and Recreation's jurisdiction.

Can I smoke a cigar in a park?

No. With citywide smoking ban, it is a violation for anyone to smoke or light cigars, cigarettes, hookahs, tobacco, or other smoking material in a park. This includes the carrying, holding, or smoking of any kind of lighted pipe, cigar or cigarette or any other lighted smoking equipment.

Can I smoke e-cigarettes in a park?

Yes. The citywide smoking ban does not pertain to e-cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic cigarillos, electronic pipes or vape-pens.

Can I smoke pot in a park?

No. The smoking of marijuana in city parks is already prohibited under state law (RCW 70.160.050.)

Is smoking allowed at a private event?

It depends. Smoking is only allowed at a private, permitted event that is not open to the general public, and requires a special written exception from the Superintendent of Parks.

Why consider citywide smoking ban?

The reasons for smoking bans tend to fall into three categories:

1. Health concerns over the effects of second-hand smoke on children, youth and other adults
2. Environmental impacts and maintenance concerns
3. Encouragement for smokers to quit
4. Easier to enforce than the current 25-foot rule

Do cigarette butts decompose?

No. Cigarette butts are not biodegradable, and can take up to 15 years to decompose. During that time, they leach cadmium, arsenic, and other poisons into the soil. Cigarette butts may also be ingested by toddlers, pets, birds and fish.

What is the Parks Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct is an administrative rule prohibiting specified behaviors in parks and at parks owned facilities. It outlines enforcement measures, including withdrawing a person's permission to be in a park by issuance of Parks Exclusions.



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Where can I get help if I want to quit smoking?

There are lots of smoking cessation programs available within the city and county, many of which are free of charge. Program providers include Group Health, UW Medicine, Plymouth Housing Group, Salvation Army, Union Gospel Mission, Bread of Life Mission, Downtown Emergency Service Center, Seattle Counseling Service, Entre Hermanos, Gay City, Asian Counseling and Referral Services, Consejo, Harborview, SeaMar, and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, to name a few. City of Seattle employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program, which partners with Horizon Health to provide smoking cessation classes and programs free of charge.

What happens if I smoke in a park? Is there a fee for smoking?

Enforcement tools will be the same as for violations of other Parks Code of Conduct rules:

1. Verbal warning and education: Patrons breaking the Code are informed of the Park Code rules, and asked to stop the behavior, or leave the premises. The point is to educate, and allow patrons to act responsibly.
2. Written trespass warning: If a patron refuses to act on a voluntary basis, they are issued a trespass warning.
3. Infraction citation: The fee is \$27, which is the same for marijuana and open- alcohol container infractions.

Repeat offenders are in violation of the trespass warning, and are subject to arrest.

Who will enforce the smoking ban?

The smoking ban will be enforced by Park Rangers and Seattle Police Officers.

Is there a ramp-up period for the citywide smoking ban?

Yes, there will be a 30-day, soft rollout of enforcement to allow for education and ramp-up. There will be a social media education campaign and partnership events.

What are the Next Steps?

- Board of Park Commissioners: Staff will brief the Park Board on April 16.
- Public Hearing: The Park Board will host a public hearing on April 16.
- Parks Superintendent makes a ruling: The Parks Superintendent will announce a ruling. If the ruling is to change the Park Code, the change will be posted in the *Daily Journal of Commerce* for 30 days.
- Administrative change: After the 30-day notice, the Parks Superintendent enacts a new rule in Code of Conduct.