

Sample Script: Important considerations before engaging about the Tobacco and Smoke-Free Environments (TSFE) Policy

1. Ensure you understand the policy related to Tobacco usage on AHS sites.
 - See script for what to say
 - Be prepared to answer questions.
2. Ensure its safe to approach the person.
 - Is it possible to have second staff nearby observing the conversation in case the person becomes agitated and you must end the conversation?
 - Second staff can observe and intervene if necessary for a preplanned exit strategy.
 - Does the person appear to be upset? I.e. pacing, finger drumming, displaying intense facial expressions.
 - If the person appears agitated do NOT approach them. You may inform protective services.
3. Be aware of your own body language, body spacing and facial expressions.
 - See video for body language, body spacing and facial expression tips.
 - Body language as or more important as words in some cases. You may have all the right verbal language, but without being aware of our body language, conversations can go sideways very quickly.

Examples of language to use:

“Good morning/afternoon, my name is _____, may I ask your name?”

Hi _____ how are you today?

- This is building a rapport before getting to the ASK.
- This allows you to gauge whether the person may or may not be receptive to an expectation based conversation.
- If the person appears to be agitated, disengage from the conversation.
- If the person appears to be receptive to a conversation see script for further examples.

Employee: Bob, I came over to explain our policy of smoking on Alberta Health Services property. We don't allow smoking on property to ensure all guests and staff can enjoy a smoke-free environment. Can I ask you to kindly smoke off property?

- Using the person's name in every sentence to establish a sense of trust and respect.
- Avoid acronyms and abbreviated terms to avoid confusion. i.e. AHS.

Smoker: “Where can I smoke?”

Employee: “Our policy prohibits smoking on our property, you may smoke anywhere off property. For example; on the sidewalk on the edge of our property grounds.”

- Explaining where they can go will help them feel as though you are not just saying “go away”.
- Clarifying where the rule comes from will help the person avoid the feeling of it being personal.

Smoker: “Why should/do I have to comply?”

- Make note the question is seeking information, it is not challenging. Therefore, provide an informative answer.

If the person is asking a challenging question such as;

Smoker: “What are **you** going to do about it?”

- Avoid emotional charged responses. Do NOT become defensive.
- Be kind but firm in your communication by inviting the opportunity for a change in behavior then noting the consequences for not complying.
- Try to use language that shows you are trying to connect not challenge the person.

Employee: “Bob, I am here to inform you of our policy and kindly ask that you smoke off property. If you choose not to comply, you may subject to a fine. We are creating a smoke- free environment for all our patients and visitors. I understand that it’s an inconvenience for you, but Bob, we truly appreciate your cooperation with this. Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.”

- Notice how the statement has balance between consequences and why it’s an expectation.
 - Every person wants to understand why they are being asked to do something.