

SNOHOMISH COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 1

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT POLICY

SUBJECT: 400.00.021.00 - HIRING TOBACCO-FREE
EMPLOYEES

1.0 PURPOSE

To support its values and Wellness Program, and comply with RCW 70.160, Snohomish County Fire Protection District No. 1 has instituted a policy of hiring tobacco-free employees beginning February 1, 2005. Applicants will receive this information as part of the conditional offer of employment.

2.0 DIVISIONS AFFECTED

All divisions.

3.0 REFERENCES

3.1 RCW 70.160

3.2 Presumption of Occupational Disease for Firefighters 51.32.185.

4.0 PHILOSOPHY

Tobacco use remains the most preventable cause of death and disease in our society, resulting in nearly 1 in 5 deaths in the United States. Tobacco use adversely affects the workplace in the following ways.

4.1 Absenteeism: On average, smokers are absent from work 50% more often than non-smokers. In addition, second-hand tobacco smoke exposure raises risk of children's ear infections, asthma and bronchitis (*Pediatrics*, Vol. 97, No. 4, April 1996, pp 560-568: *Morbidity and Mortality of Children Associated with the Use of Tobacco*), thus adding to increased absenteeism by employees taking time off for family illness.

4.2 Productivity: A one pack-per-day smoker needs a cigarette every 50 minutes to ward off withdrawal symptoms. Smokers have twice the accident rate of non-smokers. CDC has reported the annual smoking-attributable productivity costs during the period of 1995-1999 at \$1,760 per smoker. (*Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Annual smoking-attributable mortality years of potential life lost and economic costs – United States, 1995-1999. Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report 2002; 11(14):300-3.*)

4.3 Healthcare Costs: Smokers use the healthcare system 50% more than non-smokers. Smokers have more hospital admissions, take longer to

recover from illness and injury, have higher outpatient care costs, (*Journal of Occupational Medicine*, 1990; 32:521-523, *Excess insured healthcare costs from tobacco-using employees in a large group plan*. Penner M and Penner S), and have lower birth weight babies. (*Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 151, July 1997, pp. 648-653 *Tobacco and Children: An Economic Evaluation of the Medical Effects of Parental Smoking* by C. Andrew Aligne, MD and Jeffrey J. Stoddard, MD.)

5.0 POLICY

Snohomish County Fire Protection District No. 1 desires to provide a tobacco-free workplace for protection of its employees, their families and our citizens.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 The hiring manager will ensure that each applicant being interviewed understands that it is District policy to hire tobacco-free individuals.
- 6.2 Applicants will be advised of this policy in the application packet and the conditional offer of employment letter.