



Policy on Smoking

No. 1010

Policy Effective Date:
1/1/1990

Last Revision Date:
10/15/2024

Policy Owner:
Amy Sebring, Executive
Vice President and Chief
Operating Officer

Policy Author: (*Contact
Person*)
Brennan Shepard, Chief of
Staff, University
Operations

Affected Parties:
Undergraduate
Graduate
Faculty
Staff
Other

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1.0 Purpose

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive learning and working environment for its students and employees. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that smoking is “the leading preventable cause of premature disease and death in the United States.” Furthermore, research has found that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. This policy is an effort to protect students and employees from the potential health hazards and discomfort of exposure to smoke, while providing guidance to those who choose to smoke.

2.0 Policy

Smoking is prohibited within facilities owned or leased by the university and in university-owned vehicles. This prohibition extends to parking garages, covered walkways, temporary enclosed structures, trailers, and tents, as well as structures placed on university-owned property by contractors or vendors. Smoking is permitted only outdoors on university grounds, plazas, sidewalks, malls, and other similar open pedestrian-ways, provided that smokers are at least 25 feet from an air intake, entrance or exit of any facility, including parking garages, and that the smoker is lawfully of age to possess and/or use tobacco, nicotine vapor, or alternative nicotine products legal for use in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Employee Work Breaks

In accordance with [University Policy 4300, Hours of Work](#), supervisors may grant staff and wage employees working an 8-hour shift one morning break and one afternoon break which shall not exceed fifteen minutes each. These work breaks may be used to smoke outside buildings as provided in Section 2.0 above. No additional smoking breaks are allowed, nor can employees smoke during any other work period while within spaces specified in Section 2.0.

3.2 Disposal of Smoking Materials

Where ash urns are furnished, they shall be placed at outside locations (25 feet or more from entry/exit ways) to aid smokers in disposing of smoking materials.

3.3 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors on or in university facilities or vehicles to observe this smoking policy. It is the responsibility of each supervisor, manager, department head, director, dean, and vice president to enforce the provisions of this policy in their area of accountability. Those who possess and/or use tobacco, nicotine vapor, or alternative nicotine products in approved areas must be of lawful age as defined by the Code of Virginia.



Those who smoke outside of buildings are expected to be considerate and courteous of other individuals in the university community. Smoking locations should not impede traffic flow in or out of buildings and should be in a location where smoke cannot drift into office, class or living space. Additionally, smokers should leave the smoking locations free of cigarette butts and other trash materials. All faculty, staff, students, and visitors share the responsibility of keeping the campus clean, attractive, and litter-free.

4.0 Definitions

Smoking: the lighting or burning of any pipe, cigar, or cigarette, or other tobacco product; or the use of any electronic cigarette or vaping device.

5.0 References

The Health Consequences of Smoking-50 Years of Progress

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK179276/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK179276.pdf

The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/>

Virginia Tech, University Policy 4300, Hours of Work

<https://policies.vt.edu/4300.pdf>

Code of Virginia § 18.2-371.2

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter8/section18.2-371.2/>

6.0 Approval and Revisions

Approved by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Board of Visitors on November 6, 1989. Effective January 1, 1990.

- Revision 1
Smoking prohibited in all university facilities and university-owned vehicles with the exception of special purpose housing and Hancock Hall Atrium.
Approved April 7, 1997, by the President, Paul E. Torgersen.
- Revision 2
Section 2.3 deleted. Smoking no longer permitted in Hancock Hall Atrium
Approved June 17, 1999, by the President, Paul E. Torgersen.

Annual Review December 2, 2001 by Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Minnis E. Ridenour. No revisions.

- Revision 3
 - Section 2 revised. The only exception to the policy where smoking is allowed is in lodging rooms designated as smoking rooms in the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center.
 - Sections 2.1 and 2.2 deleted. Smoking is no longer permitted in Residential and Special Purpose Housing.
Approved by Residence Hall Federation on April 23, 2002.



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Approved by the Commission on Student Affairs on October 24, 2002.

Approved by University Council on December 2, 2002.

Approved by the President, Charles W. Steger, on December 2, 2002.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on March 10, 2003.

- Revision 4

Section 2 revised to read “The only exception to the policy where smoking is allowed is in lodging rooms designated as smoking rooms at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center, which is not operated by the university.” (Administrative change due to name change from Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center to the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center.) Revised February 8, 2007.

- Revision 5

To comply with Governor’s Executive Order 41 and guidelines promulgated by the Secretary of Administration for the Commonwealth of Virginia, as amended on July 22, 2008. The policy was revised to add the more stringent regulation that smoking is not permitted within 25 feet of an air intake, entrance, or exit of any facility owned or leased by the university, including parking garages. Smoking is not permitted in structures placed on state-owned property by contractors or vendors.

Approved by the Commission on University Support on November 20, 2008.

Approved by University Council on February 16, 2009.

Approved by President Charles W. Steger on February 16, 2009.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on March 23, 2009.

- Revision 6

Section 2 revised to remove the exemption that previously allowed smoking at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center.

Approved January 28, 2011 by President Charles W. Steger.

- Revision 7

Technical updates to references.

Approved January 3, 2017 by President Timothy D. Sands.

- Revision 8

Section 4 revised to add “electronic cigarette or vaping device” to the definition of Smoking.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on June 5, 2017.

- Revision 9

Added references to legal age for possession and use of tobacco products in response to change to the Code of Virginia.

Approved January 7, 2020 by Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer, Dwayne Pinkney.

- Revision 10

- Updated to include research findings of negative health impacts of smoking and secondhand smoke.
- Clarified that smoking is prohibited by employees outside of designated break periods.
- Policy owner and author changed.

Technical updates approved October 15, 2024 by Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Amy Sebring.