

The Burden of Tobacco on the Workplace

Businesses are constantly looking for ways to cut costs and increase productivity, and employee health can substantially impact a business's bottom line. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States.¹ In Indiana, smoking takes the lives of 11,100 Hoosiers each year and significantly impacts the economic vitality of our state.²

Economic Burden of Tobacco Use

About 1 in 5 Hoosier adults (21.1%) were current smokers in 2018.³ Smoking among employees increases costs for both employers and society, resulting in poorer health, increased healthcare costs, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity.^{1,4}

In the United States, smoking costs over \$300 billion annually, including:

- Nearly \$170 billion in healthcare costs¹
- Over \$156 billion in lost productivity¹

In Indiana, smoking costs over \$6 billion annually, including:

- Over \$2.9 billion in healthcare costs²
- Nearly \$3.2 billion in lost productivity⁵

What Tobacco Costs Employers

Healthcare and Lost Productivity

The annual cost to employers of a smoking employee is estimated to be \$5,800 higher than a non-smoking employee.⁴ This includes:

- Over \$2,000 more in healthcare costs
- Over \$3,500 more in lost productivity

Increased Risk of Occupational Health Hazards

Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure may make employees more vulnerable to health hazards from occupational exposure to other substances such as dusts, gases, or fumes.⁶

Fire and Injury Risk

Smoking at the workplace, including in vehicles, can increase the risk of fires and injuries.⁶ The increased fire and injury risk for worksites where smoking is allowed can increase health and building insurance costs by up to 30%.⁷

Increased Maintenance Costs

Worksites where smoking is allowed pay about \$728 more per 1,000 square feet in annual maintenance costs than worksites where smoking is not allowed.⁷

Fast Facts

- Smoking costs Hoosiers over **\$2.9 billion in health care costs²** and nearly **\$3.2 billion in lost productivity⁵** annually.
- Employers spend an extra **\$5,800 annually for a smoking employee** than a non-smoking employee due to increased health care costs and reduced productivity.⁴
- About **1 in 5** Hoosier adults (21.1%) were current smokers in 2018.³

Businesses can help reduce their tobacco burden by:

- Making their workplace 100% tobacco-free
- Offering health insurance that covers tobacco cessation benefits
- Connecting employees with resources like the Indiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW)
- Becoming a Quit Now Preferred Employer

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Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure among U.S. Workers

Approximately 20% of the U.S. adult workforce smokes, and an estimated 20% of non-smoking workers continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke at work.⁶ Smoking and secondhand smoke exposure, however, tend to be higher among workers in some industries than others. In particular, workers in blue-collar fields, such as construction and mining, and workers in accommodation and food service industries tend to report higher rates of smoking and secondhand smoke exposure.⁶

What Employers Can Do to Reduce Their Tobacco Burden

Go Tobacco-Free

Making your worksite tobacco-free, including grounds and vehicles, can lower the risk of fires and injuries and may reduce maintenance costs and insurance premiums.⁸ Workplace smoke-free policies can also help reduce smoking among workers.⁹

Cover Cessation Benefits

Offering health insurance that covers cessation benefits, such as approved medication and counseling, with little or no co-pays can help employees access the help they need to quit tobacco.

Connect Employees with Cessation Resources

The Indiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW, www.QuitNowIndiana.com) is a free telephone, web, and text counseling service that provides evidence-based coaching and support to Hoosiers who want to quit tobacco. To order Quitline materials, please visit quitnowindiana.com/employer-materials and complete the online order form.

Become a Quit Now Preferred Employer

By joining the Indiana Quit Now Preferred Employer Network, employers have access to free resources and services to help employees quit tobacco. Visit www.QuitNowIndiana.com for more information about how to become a preferred employer.

References

1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: USDHHS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), 2014.

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5 Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Indiana. March 12, 2019. Accessed September 30, 2019 from <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/indiana/>.

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8 CDC. Save Lives, Save Money: Make Your Business Smoke-Free. Atlanta: USDHHS, CDC, NCCDPHP, OSH, 2006.

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