

## MODEL POLICY FOR A SMOKEFREE CONGREGATION

Congregation Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Leader Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

### [Your Congregation's] Smokefree Policy

#### **Background**

Numerous studies have found that tobacco smoke is a major contributor to indoor air pollution, and that breathing secondhand smoke is a cause of disease in healthy nonsmokers, including heart disease, stroke, lung and other cancers, asthma and ear infections in children, and SIDS. Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States, taking roughly 53,000 lives prematurely each year. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

The U.S. Surgeon General has determined that the simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same air space does not eliminate nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that secondhand smoke cannot be reduced to safe levels by high rates of ventilation. Air cleaners, which are capable of filtering the particulate matter and odors in smoke, do not eliminate all the known toxins in secondhand smoke.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined that the risk of acute myocardial infarction and coronary heart disease associated with exposure to tobacco smoke is non-linear at low doses, increasing rapidly with relatively small doses such as those received from secondhand smoke or actively smoking one or two cigarettes a day, and has warned that all patients at increased risk of coronary heart disease or with known coronary artery disease should avoid all indoor environments that permit smoking.

Unregulated high-tech smoking devices, commonly referred to as electronic smoking devices, or "e-cigarettes," closely resemble and purposefully mimic the act of smoking by having users inhale vaporized liquid nicotine created by heat through an electronic ignition system. After testing a number of e-cigarettes from two leading manufacturers, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) determined that various samples tested contained not only nicotine but also detectable levels of known carcinogens and toxic chemicals, including tobacco-specific nitrosamines and diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical used in antifreeze. Electronic smoking devices produce an aerosol or vapor of undetermined and potentially harmful substances, which

may appear similar to the smoke emitted by traditional tobacco products. Their use in places where smoking of traditional tobacco products is prohibited creates concern and confusion and leads to difficulties in enforcing the smoking prohibitions.

[Your congregation] is committed to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment for its members and their families, employees, and visitors of this congregation.

## **Purpose**

To provide a safe and healthy environment for congregation members and their families, employees, and visitors, free from exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke and vapors emitted by electronic smoking devices.

To provide leadership in promoting a holistic view of health by supporting smokefree environments.

To support congregation members and their families, employees, and visitors with their cessation efforts in becoming free from tobacco use and nicotine dependency.

## **Congregation Policy**

[Your congregation] commits to becoming a smokefree facility. **Smoking, including the use of electronic smoking devices, hookahs, and marijuana, shall not be permitted in any congregation facilities, indoors or outdoors.** The smokefree policy applies to all facilities, owned or leased, regardless of location, by [your congregation]. Smoking shall not be permitted in any congregation owned buildings, facilities, or vehicles, or on congregation grounds, including lawn areas and parking lots.

[Your congregation] will not accept any money from either the tobacco industry or the electronic smoking device industry for events and programs, including but not limited to sponsorships, scholarship funds, or building renovations. Such funding is counter to our faith community's holistic view on health.

## **Implementation of Policy**

"No smoking" signs will be posted on congregation grounds in highly visible areas inside and outside of the buildings, including the sanctuary, and lawn areas. All ashtrays shall be removed from the premises.

Copies of this policy shall be distributed to all employees and may be included with other information given to them. Announcements shall also be printed in congregation newsletters to ensure that everyone understands the policy.

Secondhand smoke education materials and cessation information shall be made available to congregation members, employees, and visitors. In addition, on-site cessation programs shall be made available to assist and encourage individuals who wish to quit smoking. Questions and problems regarding this policy should be handled through existing programs and administrative procedures.

The success of this policy will depend on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of smokers and nonsmokers. All congregation members, employees, and visitors share in responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy.

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Signature of Congregation Leader

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Date