

# Operation Tobacco-Free Parks & Trails

*A guide to learning about & promoting tobacco-free parks, playgrounds, and recreational fields in your community*



# Welcome to the Operation Tobacco-free Parks & Trails Assessment Guide.

This guide is designed to help your coalition and community partners to:

- 1) Develop a strong understanding of the problem in your local community;
- 2) Direct you in ways to gather evidence to support your work;
- 3) Provide you with rich information and photos to put on a tri-fold display which you'll use when you recruit partners and educate decision makers.

Eventually you will want to use your grant \$\$ to purchase a tri-fold display to show your evidence. You will bring your final tri-fold to Get R!EAL's Spring Statewide Tobacco Forum. We'll provide further instruction on this later.

**START** - 1) Your youth will begin with the "my experience" sheet where they will list how tobacco has affected them in local parks, trails, ball fields. Discuss their experiences as a group. This needs to be done in your first few meetings. 2) Have each youth complete the GR Coalition Membership form. You will need to FAX these forms to Get R!EAL so we can send you T shirts. Each new member that joins down the road should complete a membership form and send it to Get R!EAL.

**NEXT STEP** – You and your youth will work through the community assessment checklist. Include your local health agency partner in that meeting so they can help you out. Remember they have lots of information on other tobacco control workers and resources in your community.

**AND THEN** – Review the 15 Reasons list. You want all coalition members to have a strong understanding of WHY this work is important.

**FINALLY** – You'll work on your coalition assignments. You have required activities AND some optional work. Decide as a group what you want to do. All of this is due by April 2010.

**AS ALWAYS** – Contact your Get R!EAL TA provider with any questions.

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## My Experience with Tobacco in Our Parks:

Have each coalition member fill this out and discuss as a group.

Describe what you have seen or experienced with tobacco in parks, playgrounds, or other outdoor settings like ball fields and fairgrounds.

How do you feel about what you experienced? Was it OK or not OK?

Get R!EAL Coalition Membership Form  
Coalition: \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome to Get R!EAL. If you've been in Get R!EAL before – welcome back!  
Please take a moment to complete the following survey. Give this to your adult sponsor when you have completed it. Thanks again.

Your first name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

What grade are you in?

- 5th grade
- 6th grade
- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade
- 11th grade
- 12th grade

What is your gender?       Male       Female

Which of the ethnicities below do you MOST identify with?

- African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- White
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ADULT T-shirt size?

- Xtra small
- Small
- Medium
- Large
- Xtra large

Please return this survey to your adult sponsor. Thanks!

## Community Assessment Checklist

Is YOUR community ready for a tobacco-free parks and trails policy?

Do this activity as a group. This will help to know how your community AND elected officials feel about tobacco control and how ready they are for a tobacco-free policy. Your Local Health Agency might need to help with this activity.

1. Does your community have an existing adult tobacco coalition?  Yes  No  
(your LHA would know)

2. Does your community have a group of interested citizens who have worked on health issues before like the Kiwanis or a school task force?

Yes  No

a. If yes, list some of them:

3. What about local tobacco policies already in place? (check all that apply)

We have tobacco-free restaurants, buildings, indoor places policy

We have tobacco-free outdoor patios

We have tobacco-free schools policy

Is it enforced?  Yes!  Sort of!  Not really  Don't know

We have tobacco-free government buildings

Our youth organizations (Boys & Girls Club, 4-H, Boys Scouts & Girl Scouts, YMCA, and Recreation Centers) have tobacco-free policies

We have tobacco-free city-owned outdoor recreations fields (baseball, soccer, and rodeo)

Other:

4. It is important to know the areas you are focusing on. List how many city parks, trails, recreation fields, golf courses, and playgrounds your community has:

# of city parks:

# of trails:

# of recreation (ball) fields:

# of city golf courses:

# of playgrounds:

# of fairgrounds:

# of other outdoor areas:

5. Can you find a mission statement for your city's department of parks & recreation online? If so, list it below.

# 15 Reasons Parks & Playgrounds Should be Tobacco-Free

Review all and discuss each point as a group

- 1) Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.
- 2) There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- 3) Secondhand smoke leads to many serious illnesses including asthma, respiratory infections and cardiovascular disease.
- 4) When children see adults using tobacco in family-friendly places such as parks and playgrounds, they see the behavior as acceptable and are more likely to mimic the behavior.
- 5) A critical part in addressing youth smoking is to create an environment where tobacco use is not considered the norm.
- 6) Parks and trails are about clean air, natural beauty & engaging in healthy activities.
- 7) Kids should be able to play without being directly exposed to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.
- 8) Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter & don't decompose.
- 9) Cigarette butts are hazardous to children, animals, and the environment: children who ingest discarded cigarette butts are at risk for toxic poisoning, choking, or burning themselves.
- 10) Cigarette butt cleanup is costly to taxpayers.
- 11) In Colorado, 80% of the adult population doesn't smoke.
- 12) Colorado kids who become new daily smokers each year = 5,600.
- 13) Smoking is NOT a Constitutional Right.
- 14) It is common sense to protect children where they play and socialize.
- 15) Tobacco-free policies help people quit tobacco use.

# YOUR COALITION ASSIGNMENT

## Researching the Problem and Building Support

This is how you can show policy makers that 1) there is a problem in your community and 2) the community supports tobacco-free parks & trails.

Do BOTH of the following activities:

1) Conduct a Community Survey: A survey can provide you with some statistical data and personal stories from community members that you can share with policy makers. Go to local parks, playgrounds, and ball fields and ask community members to complete your survey. In your kit you will find a clip board you can use for the surveys. Once the person fills out the survey and gives it back, give them a small Get R!EAL gear item as a thank you. They do not need to put their name on the survey. Try to get at least 50 surveys done.

2) Photo Voice: Use photographs to be your voice! This allows youth to capture and show your community's tobacco problems in outdoor settings (parks, playgrounds, etc). Use a digital camera to photograph people smoking/using tobacco in your local parks. Also capture who typically hangs out in your parks (parents with small children, families, sports teams, etc). Be creative with your photography. Remember you are capturing evidence of a problem for policy makers. You can artistically arrange these photos on a tri-fold display with statistics from your survey.

AND

Choose ONE of the activities below:

Conduct a Tobacco Litter Collection Event: A litter clean-up (BUTT PICKUP) is a great way to show policy makers that tobacco litter is a problem in your parks. Your coalition youth and their friends/family can use the clean up kits provided by Get R!EAL. Instructions are inside the kit. You are limited to 3 outdoor areas. Afterwards, your coalition will educate the community about your activity by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. We've provided a template for that. It is so important to get some press!

OR

Conduct a BUTT CLEAN UP Contest: Your coalition can announce a campaign and competition to inform and challenge local middle school and/or high school students to think about the unhealthy effects of cigarette butt litter and to do something about it. Limit this contest to 3 schools as we have limited supplies (they each do 1 location). The Great Butt Out will give students a chance to make a difference in their community by collecting cigarette litter - the number one form of litter in the U.S. - and compete with other schools for citywide recognition. Promote this event in school papers and school announcements. Afterwards, write a letter to the editor of your local paper to promote your work.

## What You'll Need

1) For the Community Survey: We've provided you with 10 copies in here – make more – we'd like for you to shoot for 40-50 surveys so you have a good number.

Take the clipboard provided by Get R!EAL in your kit

Have plenty of pens or pencils for your survey takers

Bottled water, hat, sun block for your coalition youth members

Get R!EAL hacky sacks – give them to the survey takers when they are done with the survey

A folder to hold all the completed surveys

2) Photo Voice: It might be a good idea to do the photo voice activity on the same day that you do your surveys (it may take multiple trips to the parks to get good surveys and photos).

Bring a digital camera or two.

Assign 2-3 youth to take photographs.

Youth who have digital cameras can be in charge of the photos – remind them to focus on people smoking/using tobacco in the local parks. Also capture who typically hangs out in your parks (parents with small children, families, sports teams, etc). Encourage everyone to be creative with their photography. Remember they are capturing evidence of a problem for policy makers.

Note pad – They may want a note pad to write down any observations that go with the photos they are taking. This will help them craft the story about each picture.

# Community Tobacco Survey

Please tell us what you think about tobacco-free recreational places for our community (like parks & trails) by answering the following questions.

- 1) What is the zip code or name of the city you live in now? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Do you think tobacco litter is a problem in our parks/playgrounds?  Yes  No
- 3) Would you favor a ban of tobacco products in all park areas?  Yes  No

Which outdoor areas should be tobacco free? (no smoking/no spit tobacco)

- |                           |                           |                          |                                  |                               |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4) City parks             | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 5) Playgrounds            | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 6) Sports/Ball fields     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 7) Skateboard parks       | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 8) Rodeo grounds          | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 9) Fairgrounds            | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 10) Walking/hiking trails | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 11) Picnic areas          | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 12) Golf courses          | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 13) Campgrounds           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |
| 14) Dog parks             | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> Don't know | <input type="radio"/> Refused |

15) What would help maintain tobacco-free parks? (check all that you like)

- Signs     Fines     Patrol     Media     Public education

16) What is your age?  10 – 17     18 – 30     31 – 50     51+

17) Are you a... (check all that apply)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth leader/coach | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco user       | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth sports participant | <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete             |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Golfer                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Former tobacco user |

**Thank you for your time!**



Sponsored by Get R!EAL, Colorado's youth movement against the tobacco industry.

## Community Tobacco Survey Summary Page

Once you've collected ALL your surveys. Look them over and total up each response on this summary form. Get R!EAL can help you create some statistics with this information! Fax this summary sheet to your TA provider and we'll help.

TOTAL # of surveys your coalition collected: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) How many respondents live in your city? (based on their zip code) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many thought tobacco litter is a problem in parks/playgrounds? # \_\_\_ YES # \_\_\_ No
- 3) How many favor a ban of tobacco products in all park areas? # \_\_\_ YES # \_\_\_ No

Which outdoor areas should be tobacco free? (no smoking/no spit tobacco)

- |                           |           |          |                  |               |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|---------------|
| 4) City parks             | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 5) Playgrounds            | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 6) Sports/Ball fields     | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 7) Skateboard parks       | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 8) Rodeo grounds          | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 9) Fairgrounds            | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 10) Walking/hiking trails | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 11) Picnic areas          | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 12) Golf courses          | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 13) Campgrounds           | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |
| 14) Dog parks             | # ___ Yes | # ___ No | # ___ Don't know | # ___ Refused |

15) What would help maintain tobacco-free parks? (check all that you like)

# \_\_\_ Signs    # \_\_\_ Fines    # \_\_\_ Patrol    # \_\_\_ Media    # \_\_\_ Public education

16) What is their age? # \_\_\_ 10 – 17    # \_\_\_ 18 – 30    # \_\_\_ 31 – 50    # \_\_\_ 51+

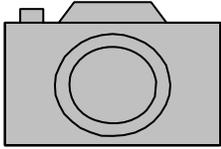
17) Are they a... (write down the number of respondents who checked each category)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent _____             | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth leader/coach _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth sports participant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco user _____       | <input type="checkbox"/> Golfer _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Former tobacco user _____       |

Get R!EAL FAX 303-724-1268    ATTENTION: \_\_\_\_\_

# Photo Voice Activity

*"A picture is worth a thousand words"*



Use photographs to be your voice! This allows you to capture and show your community's problems. The photo voice activity allows youth to do some investigation of tobacco's presence in your local parks, playgrounds, trails, fairgrounds, and recreation/ball fields. Use your own digital camera to take your photographs. Once you have your photos, you can place them on your tri-fold display to back-up your survey data.

## What is photo voice?

Photo voice is an approach to social action. It helps people to record & reflect their community's problems. It promotes conversation about important issues through photographs. Most importantly for our work, it can engage policymakers.

## Why conduct a photo voice activity?

The photo voice activity allows youth to do some investigation of tobacco products in their community and reflect on what they captured. The youth will take photos of tobacco litter and tobacco behaviors found in your local parks, trails, etc and write a short description of their photograph.

## Where do we get the materials for the photo voice?

Materials are included in your assessment kit. Use your own digital cameras for really nice pictures.

## How do I facilitate this?

1. Introduce the project and the general concept of photovoice
2. Let them know what to capture and why. Remember they are capturing evidence of a problem for policy makers. Capture tobacco activity and tobacco litter in city parks, playgrounds, hiking trails, ball fields, etc. Capture who they see using parks (kids on playgrounds, seniors, athletes, families, etc).
3. Discuss the process for taking the pictures – how will they download and will they turn them all in to you, the adult sponsor?
4. Allow time for all of you to reflect on and talk about the pictures. Have them storytell a little about each one and take notes – you'll put some of these notes on paper with the corresponding photograph.
5. Eventually they'll arrange these photos on a tri-fold display. Down the road you may create a PowerPoint presentation to share with potential partners and other community members. These photos and their story will come in very handy!

## Tobacco Litter Collection Event

A litter clean-up (BUTT PICKUP) is a great way to show policy makers that tobacco litter is a problem in your parks. Your coalition youth and their friends/family can use the clean up kits provided by Get R!EAL. Instructions are inside the kit. Afterwards, your coalition will educate the community about your activity by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. We've provided a template for that.

-  Bring a camera. Taking photos of your clean-up is a great way to show the media and policy makers how big a problem tobacco use in your parks & recreation fields really is.
-  Make sure EVERYONE is wearing gloves. Tobacco litter can be hazardous so protect your group by wearing gloves.
- Have someone count the number of adults you see using tobacco/smoking and the number of youth you see using tobacco/smoking during the clean-up time.
- Give each person (or team) a 1 gallon plastic zippered bag to collect litter in. Remind them that they are looking for tobacco-related litter ONLY. This includes cigarettes/filters, cigarette packaging, spit tobacco packaging, and other tobacco products.
- Ask them to keep a count of EACH ITEM they place in the bag and write the number AND location on the outside of the bag with a permanent marker when they are done.
-  Set a TIME LIMIT on the clean-up. It should only take about 30 minutes to get the data you need.
- There should be one or two people who collect all the filled bags and record the data on the "Tobacco Litter Collection Data" sheet. The filled bags should be placed in a large trash bag and sealed once everything is collected. Keep this bag as evidence and to show your decision makers.
-  Make sure EVERYONE washes their hands with soap and water when it is all done.
-  When presenting your litter, be prepared to talk about where your group picked up the litter (the specific park or recreation field), how long the clean-up lasted, how many pieces of litter were collected, and where the park litter was mostly found.

## What You'll Need

We've provided the following items for your Tobacco Litter Collection Event:

- 3 data collection forms (in the plastic cover). Make sure each team counts the number of items they collect. Assign someone to count the # of adults using tobacco and the # of youth using tobacco. Log it on the data report form.
- 10 rubber gloves for those picking up tobacco litter
- 3 one-gallon zip lock bags (1 for each team or 1 for each park)
- 30 Butt-out stickers. The youth can wear them and/or hand them out to park patrons to educate them about their event.
- Bring a digital camera – assign a youth to take pictures of your coalition collecting the tobacco litter.
- You may want to provide your own trash bag for all the zip locks to be stored in. The litter can get smelly. Keep track of all the litter you collect!

## Tobacco Litter Collection Data Report

Name of group collecting data:

Date of collection	Facility or Location name and type (playground, park, ball field, etc)	# of tobacco litter items collected	# of adults seen smoking/using tobacco	# of youth seen smoking/using tobacco

Comments:

## The Great Butt Out Clean-up Contest



Your coalition can announce a campaign and competition to inform and challenge local middle school and/or high school students to think about the unhealthy effects of cigarette butt litter and to do something about it. The Great Butt Out will give students a chance to make a difference in their community by collecting cigarette litter – the number one form of litter in the U.S. – and compete with other schools for citywide recognition. Promote this event in school papers and school announcements. Finally, have your coalition educate the community about the contest by writing a letter to the editor of your local paper. We've provided a template for that. It is so important to get some press!

The contest:

- Limit this contest to 3 middle OR high schools (we have limited supplies)
- Your coalition will chose the two to three days in October or November to hold the contest – let the competing schools know the exact days they can pick up their tobacco litter.
- Give each competing school a Tobacco Litter Collection event kit (the gloves, plastic bags, trash bags, and data reporting form). Your adult sponsor will have to arrange with the schools for pick-up of the Litter kits.
- Once the contest day has ended, your adult sponsor will collect the litter trash bags and supplies from each school.
- Collected litter is weighed and the top school is determined.

**For your coalition to decide...**

How you will recognize the winner. Would the mayor be willing to recognize them?

Can you get the local paper or other media to run a story?

Save all the collected litter and data – you'll need this when your coalition eventually goes to a decision maker to propose the policy. Perhaps the competing schools will want to continue working with you on this policy. Keep them in the loop! The more people on your team, the better!



## Letter to the Editor Template

Letters to the editor are a great way to write in the local newspaper about your group, your goals, and why tobacco-free parks are important. Check with your newspaper's rules for content and length.

### Tips

- Be short and to the point (150 words or less)
- Be clear that you want tobacco-free parks in your community
- What activity did you do in the community and why?
- Sign the letter and include an address and phone number.
- Be **TIMELY** – send the letter on the same day or soon after your activity.

### Template Letter to the Editor to send to local media

**[DATE]**

Dear Editor:

Our city parks were created as a healthy place for us to experience natural beauty and engage in healthy activities. We'd like to see our parks become healthier by making them tobacco free. The 2006 Surgeon General's report on secondhand smoke concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. A tobacco-free policy for would protect all residents from secondhand smoke.

On **[DATE]**, local youth from **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**'s Get R!EAL coalition collected **[number]** pounds of tobacco litter from **[LOCATION]** to raise awareness. Cigarettes are the most littered item in the U.S. and take 5-10 years to decompose. Infants and children often ingest discarded cigarettes which can cause nausea, vomiting, and other symptoms.

We all deserve the right to breathe clean air especially in our community parks and playgrounds.

Sincerely,

**[YOUR NAME]**

**[YOUR SCHOOL]** Get R!EAL Coalition

**[YOUR ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER]**

## Creating Ideas for your Policy

So! You've gathered some amazing evidence of your community problem. Your coalition has taken photographs, collected community surveys, and had a tobacco litter collection event. Now it is time to think more about what you could do to solve the problem.

Please write down the reasons you want this policy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

List all the SPECIFIC locations you would want to be included in your policy (you already made a list in the very beginning during the assessment). Be really thorough and go for as much as you can:

How will you help to promote this policy (make sure it is followed)? Get R!EAL can help provide park signs. You can educate the community, create a press release, articles in local newsletters, post on parks & recreation website, etc). Think about what the surveys said.