

Tobacco-Free Schools in Montana

Youth tobacco use is decreasing and comprehensive tobacco-free school policies are an important part of this trend.

Schools and Tobacco

Schools can actively promote and model a healthy, tobacco-free lifestyle for students:

- Adopt and enforce tobacco-free policies that include off-campus, school-sponsored events.
- Refuse to accept tobacco industry-developed school supplies or promotional items.
- Refuse to accept sponsorship monies from the tobacco industry for sports, clubs, or other school-related activities.

Montana Students and Tobacco

Surveys of Montana students in grades 8, 10, and 12 show both progress *and* opportunity for reducing tobacco use.^{1, 2}

- Youth smoking is decreasing - from 27% in 2000, to 16% in 2008.
- The proportion of youth who have ever tried smoking is decreasing - from 57% in 2000 to 36% in 2008.
- Use of smokeless tobacco products by boys is decreasing - from 18% in 2000 to 15% in 2008.
- Of those youth who have tried smoking, nearly 30% report doing so while in elementary school and nearly one-half try their first cigarette while in middle school.
- One-fourth (24%) of high school seniors continue to report that they smoke.
- One-fourth (26%) of high school senior boys continue to report that they use smokeless tobacco products.

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The Law

Montana's statewide tobacco-free schools provision of the 2005 Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits anyone from using tobacco products in a public school building or on any public school property at any time.

- Passed by the Montana legislature as part of the 2005 Clean Indoor Air Act.
- Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, and smokeless tobacco.
- Prohibition applies to students, faculty, administrators, as well as janitors, parents, school board members, sports fans, alumni, guests – anyone entering school property at any time.
- School property includes any public land, fixtures, buildings, or other property maintained at public expense where minor-aged children receive instruction, and includes school playgrounds, school steps, parking lots, administration buildings, athletic facilities, gymnasiums, locker rooms, and school buses.
- School principals (or their designees) have the authority to enforce this law.
- Violators who smoke or use other tobacco products on school property can be fined between \$25 and \$100.

➤ The law provides two exceptions:

- Tobacco products are permitted on school property if they are part of a teacher- or administration-sanctioned educational lesson about the risks of tobacco use.
- Tobacco products are permitted on school property if they are used as part of a Native American cultural activity in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Sources:

1. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, "Trends in Youth Tobacco Use and Attitudes, 2000-2006," *Montana Prevention Needs Assessment Community Surveys*, March, 2007.

2. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, *Youth Tobacco Use on the Decline in Montana*, May, 2009.



expect a smokefree
Montana

Montana's tobacco use prevention community addresses the public health crisis caused by the use of all forms of commercial tobacco products and works to eliminate tobacco use, especially among young people, via programs and policies throughout Montana.