

Smoking Prohibition

For Stakeholders

The majority of business premises in Singapore are required to be partly, if not fully, smoke-free. Legislation has been progressively introduced from 1970 to the present day to make work environments safer and more comfortable for employees and patrons.

Responsibility of the Management and Operators

Managers of specified places and operators of specified vehicles are required under the law to ensure that the smoking prohibition is observed at their premises or in the vehicles. The manager or operator has the duty to request smokers to stop smoking, smoke at a designated smoking area where available, or leave the premises or vehicle. If the smoker refuses to leave, the management or its representatives should deal with the smoker as it would with difficult or uncooperative persons.

Management or operators who failed to carry out their statutory duties to ensure smoking prohibition is observed within their premises or vehicles may be liable to a fine up to \$1,000 for first conviction and fine up to \$2,000 for second or subsequent conviction.

The guide below is useful for businesses and managers of premises or operators of public service vehicles for dealing with customers or visitors who do not observe the smoking prohibition.

Guidelines for the Handling of Customers or Visitors who Smoke in a Prohibited Place

If a person is found smoking in a prohibited area, the manager or operator is required to inform the smoker to cease smoking immediately, proceed to the nearest designated smoking area, if available, or leave the premises or vehicle. If there is a feedback on breach of the smoking prohibition, the manager or operator is required to investigate into the feedback and take necessary actions to deal with the breach i.e. informing the smoker to cease smoking or leave the place. If the person refuses to do so, the manager may seek assistance from NEA by calling NEA Hotline at 1800-CALL-NEA (1800-2255-632).

The manager/operator could use phrases such as “I am sorry Sir/Mdm, smoking is prohibited by law in this place or vehicle”, “Please do not smoke”, “You may wish to move to the smoking area or smoking corner” (if the place has one) or “You may wish to step outside the premises or leave the vehicle to finish your cigarette” to request the smoker to cease smoking or leave the premises or vehicle.

Display of ‘No-Smoking’ Signage

Managers of specified places and operators of specified vehicles are required to display ‘No-Smoking’ signage in conspicuous positions; the signs must be of an adequate size and of a sufficient number. They must carry the international ‘No-Smoking’ symbol, comprising a single cigarette enclosed in a circle with a bar across it, and the word ‘By Law’.

It is recommended that the signage include content directing smokers to Health Promotion Board’s QuitLine (as indicated in Fig. 1) to encourage smoking cessation:



Figure 1

For more information on the QuitLine service, please visit <https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/89/quit-smoking>

The Law Protects the Manager

Under the law, any person who hinders, obstructs, threatens, abuses, molests or assaults the manager in the performance of his duty is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000, a jail term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

Creating a Designated Smoking Area

NEA encourages premises owners whose premises are currently not prohibited places, to look into demarcating designated smoking areas within their premises for the benefit of their occupants and visitors. Attached are the guidelines for the setting up of DSA.

For places where smoking is already prohibited under the Smoking (Prohibition in Certain Places) Act, DSAs will not be allowed unless the Act explicitly allows it.

Inspection of Business Premises

NEA officers regularly inspect business premises around Singapore to ensure that the smoking prohibition is adhered to. During inspections, the operator should cooperate and allow NEA officers full access to the establishment. It is recommended that a manager or a staff accompany the officers at all times during their inspection in order to provide explanations where necessary or to receive comments. If the inspection uncovers any violations, the NEA officers may take enforcement.