



## SMOKE/TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

# READING THE SIGNS

## SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS



## An Introduction to this Signage Guide

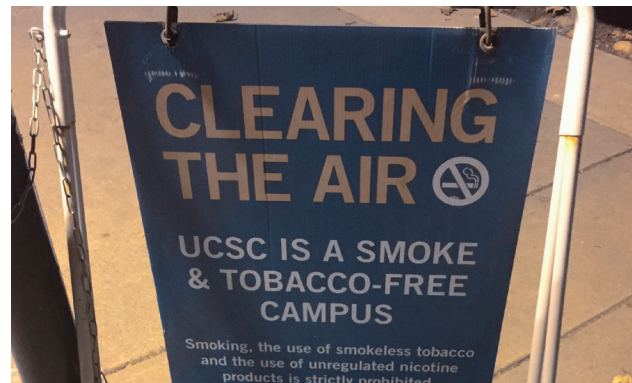
Smoke and tobacco-free (STF) college campuses are becoming the norm across the nation. One of the most commonly used strategies for increasing awareness of the STF policy is the use of signage throughout campus. The purpose of this Guide is to provide colleges with a list of signage options and best practices when it comes to messaging and placement—including different successful types of signage on campuses. Many of the ideas outlined in this Guide are a compilation of the ingenuity and creativity of California college campuses, both two and four year schools in rural and urban communities, who have incorporated the use of signage as part of broader educational and awareness efforts. Please consider using and adapting these ideas on your campus to collectively build on promising strategies of increasing awareness of the STF policy.

### Smoke and Tobacco-Free Signage has two main purposes:

1. To promote the campus policy
2. To show where smoking, vaping, and tobacco use is prohibited on campus

In some cases, depending on the message on the signage, signs may also encourage tobacco quit attempts by including the 1-800-NO-BUTTS number.

These goals can most effectively be reached by displaying both temporary health or wellness-branded signage **and** permanent “smoke/tobacco-free” signage.





## DIFFERENCES IN TYPES OF SIGNAGE REFERENCED IN THIS GUIDE

There are a variety of signs colleges can use to educate campus community members on the smoke and tobacco-free policy. These include temporary signs and permanent signs. Recommendations included in this Toolkit are organized by sign type.

Something to keep in mind no matter what type of signage you decide to use is to **use positive messaging on all of your materials**. Health messaging research has shown that individuals are more likely to comply with signs that portray positive messaging (i.e. “healthy campus”) rather than signs with exclusively negative messaging (i.e. “no smoking”).<sup>1</sup> Promote messages like clean air, healthy campus, sustainable environment, etc. to help change tobacco use behavior. This may in part be due to student’s perception of campus support.<sup>2</sup>

**TEMPORARY SIGNS** are intended to be used for a brief period of time and can be moved throughout campus. These signs tend to be lower cost, easy to move, and may include a unique message to promote the STF policy.

A banner at the entrance to a college/ university campus with the message, *Welcome to Our Smoke/Tobacco-Free Campus!*



1 Dawley, H., Morrison, J., Carrol, S. (1981, December). *The Effect of Differently Worded No-Smoking Signs on Smoking Behavior*. Retrieved from The International Journal of the Addictions.  
2 Lee, J., Purcell, C., Chaney, B. (2017, August). *An Experiment Assessing Punitive versus Wellness Framing of a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy on Students’ Perceived Level of University Support*. Retrieved from International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

**PERMANENT SIGNS** are typically secured to a building or the ground and made from materials that can withstand weather and other elements (such as graffiti). These signs contain the standard policy message informing individuals that the use of combustible products and other forms of tobacco use (e.g., smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes) are not permitted on campus property.



A metal sign strategically placed throughout campus to remind individuals of the STF policy in place.

**OTHER FORMS OF SIGNS AND ENGAGEMENT** may manifest through branded campaigns that are intended for use as advertisements on mobile products for a brief period of time that can be easily moved and distributed throughout campus (i.e. buttons, t-shirts, digital signage, stickers, etc.). The goals of an STF policy branding campaign are to favorably develop a brand image unique to the campus and awareness of the STF policy in a positive format.



Supplemental take-away advertisements engage students, staff, and faculty in the conversation of the STF policy and functions and mobile advertisement.

**\*\*Campuses who have experienced success with use of STF signage have reported using a mix of branded campaigns on temporary signage, either branded or non-branded permanent signage, and supplemental engagement.\*\***



## Temporary Signs

The primary role of SFT temporary signage is to raise awareness of the smoke/tobacco-free policy. Temporary signage also allows campuses the flexibility to creatively design and place signage in areas most needed to increase awareness of the policy such as entrances, parking lots, student housing, large events, and smoking hot spots.

### TYPES OF TEMPORARY SIGNS:

**A-FRAMES:** A-frame signs can be moved around campus to different smoking and vaping “hot spots” that pop up around campus. These areas may be old designated areas the campus had before the adoption of the 100% STF policy or new hot spots in hidden areas. A-frames are also good for large size campuses that create a rotation placement schedule or for placement during large community wide events that are open to the public.



**BANNERS:** Banners are highly visible large displays of the STF policy, often including campaign materials and/or logos. Placement of large banners at the entrance of the school provides an opportunity for all individuals entering campus to be alerted to the policy. Banners can also be placed in other strategic, high-trafficked locations such as the entrance of bookstores, Student Services lobby or sporting facilities.



**LAWN STAKES:** This is a low-cost way to advertise a STF policy when needing to place a sign lower to the ground. Lawn stakes can also be used during special awareness events such as a Smoke/Tobacco-free 5K run or walk where messaging includes the STF policy and related statistics.



*Note: Fasten all lawn stakes securely to the ground upon initial installation and check the stakes during days with high wind to ensure they continue to remain upright and line the walkways.*



**LIGHT POLE FLAGS:** Promote campus STF policy to vehicle and foot traffic high above the reach of vandals with flags made of vinyl, printed front and back to reach both directions of traffic.



**POSTERS/FLYERS:** Either for outdoor or indoor promotion. Flyers can also be placed digitally on college websites, digital advertising screens in central campus locations, and social media platforms.



**TABLE SIGNS:** Promote your STF policy, social media handles, and upcoming STF events in places with an audience standing or sitting around, such as in a campus dining common area and library study spaces.



**DECALS ON WINDOWS:** Cling stickers placed on windows at primary locations around campus, (including student lounges, classrooms, libraries, and health centers) promoting the STF policies and any branding or logos in use.

TYPE OF SIGN	MATERIAL	AVERAGE SIZE	COST	PLACEMENT
A-Frames	Cardboard/Plastic	(3' x 2')	\$	Smoking/Vaping Hot Spots/ Campus Quad/Lawn Area
Lawn Stakes	Cardboard/ Laminated Paper	(9" x 12")	\$	Campus Quad/Lawn Area
Banners	Vinyl/Cotton	(4' x 10')	\$	Highly Used Campus Entrances or other highly visible areas around campus
Light Pole Flags	Recycled Material/Nylon	(2.63" x 10.17")	\$	Flag Poles
Posters/Flyers	Laminated Paper	(0.5" x 0.5")	\$	Bulletin boards, classrooms, etc.
Table Signs	Nylon/Cotton	(2" x 5.67")	\$	Dining Commons
Decals/Stickers on windows	Vinyl or plastic cling stickers	(3" x 3")	\$	student lounges, class buildings, libraries, and health centers

\$ = Low Cost (\$50 - \$250)      \$\$ = Medium Cost (\$250 - \$500)      \$\$\$ = High Cost (\$500 and up)  
 Prices may vary depending on local vendors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Temporary signage is meant to be moved throughout campus to ensure individuals are seeing SFT messages and for greater exposure of such messaging to a wide range of locations.

Temporary signs may vary in **messages** and **designs** compared to permanent signs, though having a unifying slogan or logo will increase the visibility of your campaign.





## Messaging and Design

### INCLUDE RATIONALE

Young people like to know why a policy was passed to understand the rationale prior to accepting it, so including a rationale for why the policy was adopted may help with compliance efforts.

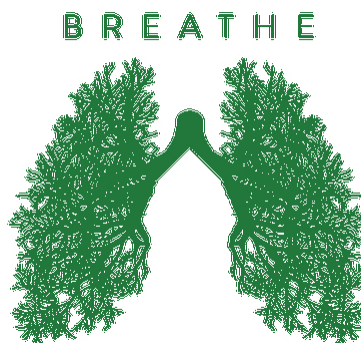
### USE YOUR CAMPUS CULTURE

Using values and imagery that are important to your campus helps with audience engagement. Remember to use the positive language in all STF signage.

### INCLUDE QUIT RESOURCES

(i.e. 1-800-nobutts).

Especially important on signage that will be placed in hot spot areas. Include local and national quit resources to reinforce support efforts.



### CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE OF TEMPORARY SIGNAGE

Consider placing temporary signage in areas where tobacco is commonly used to prepare tobacco users for the upcoming change in policy.

Budget for replacement signs for temporary signs that are moved or damaged.

When possible, place temporary signage out of reach of potential violators.

Consider your campus' unique needs. There may be a higher demand for banners and sidewalk signs in high-density urban areas with more foot traffic, whereas suburban and rural areas may need larger signs for better visibility from roadways.



## Permanent Signs

Permanent signs may take longer to obtain approval for placement around campus. While temporary signs are being placed throughout campus at the beginning of a new policy, permanent signs can be designed, approved, ordered, and installed during the first and second year of a smoke/ tobacco-free policy. Permanent signs often display the international “no smoking” symbol, standardized policy language, the government code or administrative policy number, and how the policy is being enforced (especially if citations are administered on campus). Permanent signs may also include quit resources, attractive colors and, if the policy is branded, a slogan or logo.

### TYPES OF PERMANENT SIGNS:

**PLAQUES:** One best practice is the use of long-lasting plaques used as signage in areas commonly used by tobacco users.

**ETCHED ON BUILDINGS:** Most etchings embody bold significance and a sense of permanence of a particular policy.

**ART PIECES:** Permanent art dedications, trail markers, memorials and works of sculptures are examples of types of art that can be permanently placed in areas commonly used by tobacco users displaying the campus STF policy.

**GROUND DECALS:** (or street decals) These are large images and messages on the walkways or roads with STF policies entering the campus or near hotspots. This form of messaging is visible even when walkers are looking at a phone or at the ground. Could be done with spray paint, stickers, or special decals.



TYPE OF SIGN	MATERIAL	COST
Plaques	Plastic/Metal	\$-\$\$\$
Steel Poles	Metal	\$\$-\$\$\$
Etched on Buildings	Plaque-Like Material/Metals	\$\$\$
Art Pieces	Statues with STF Policy	\$-\$\$\$ (depending on level of student involvement or donation of artwork)
Ground Decals	Spray paint/ Durable Sticker Material	\$-\$\$\$

\$ = Low Cost (\$50 - \$250)      \$\$ = Medium Cost (\$250 - \$500)      \$\$\$ = High Cost (\$500 and up)  
 Prices may vary depending on local vendors.

**MESSAGING AND DESIGN**

The primary strength of permanent signs is their durability. Once signs are posted, they should retain their look and last for several years which will limit the need for personnel and materials resources to support the maintenance and replacement of signage.

Using a policy number and policy language establishes a sense of authority on signage.

Make sure permanent signage adapts product images covered in the policy (e.g., using images of cigarettes, blunts, e-cigarettes, marijuana, etc.)

The use of the universally recognized international “no smoking” symbol may be included in the design of permanent signage. The image clearly depicts its intent.

**PLACEMENT**

Install signs in parking lots, high trafficked areas, main campus pathways, housing, and commonly used and centralized areas (i.e. library, student union).

Place signage near entrance points of the college/university campus to set the tone throughout campus pathways and property.

Refer to data assessments or environmental scans of common smoking areas and consider placement of signage in such areas.



## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Permanent signage may need to be standardized and approved by college/university administrators based on campus beautification policies.

As approval of permanent signage can be a lengthy process, consider developing and placing temporary signage on campus in the interim.

Budget and plan for maintenance: communicate with facility department the need for metal signs and plaques to be washed throughout the year.

Permanent signage is generally the same size throughout campus as institutions purchase uniform permanent signs in bulk.

Begin installation of new or updated signage during the summer months when there are fewer students on campus or other session breaks to minimize disruption.

Most campuses have a style guide for permanent signage, make sure to research existing requirements before starting the design process.



## Additional Ways to Promote and Engage the Campus

These are additional examples of practices to increase awareness of the STF policy as part of a branded campaign that engage staff and faculty at low to moderately cost to supplement the STF policy enforcement and marketing.



**MARQUEES:** This type of digital sign provides the campus community messaging and information about campus events, activities, and services. They are meant to be a part of the college/university's suite of communication platforms, which can reach people in transit with messages that are short and easy to comprehend in a few seconds. Typically, there is no cost to post messages such as a campus wide policy, however it is important to research your campus requirements and sizes for these digital signs.

**EMAIL SIGNATURES:** Including the STF policy in email signatures is an easy and no cost strategy to increase awareness of the policy. While it is not feasible to ask all staff and faculty to do this, recruiting personnel from key departments may generate more participation.



**COMPUTER MONITOR SCREENS:** Consider approaching computer labs on campus to request that the campus STF policy be used as a screensaver or as a tailored background on computer screens. This can be for a limited time such as the first two weeks of a new term or during certain observances such as National Public Health Week or the week leading up to Kick Butts Day. This is a no cost strategy in terms of supplies or equipment, though it will take staff time to complete set up.





**TABLE CLOTHS:** Many departments such as the Student Health Center or Health Promotion Office purchase table cloths with their department names and logos on them; adding a STF policy statement to the table cloths will help reinforce the message when conducting table events.



**DURABLE STICKERS FOR WATER BOTTLES:** As a promotional item STF policy stickers can be given to students to place on water bottles with “I am tobacco-free” message as they are currently a popular item on campuses.



**BUTTONS:** Campuses can brand their campaign using buttons as they are handy to pass out, inexpensive to make, and people will wear them to show their support.



**T-SHIRTS:** A branded t-shirt displaying a STF policy makes for a perfect introduction of any awareness campaign. It is a great tool for prompting questions. Who is that? What is his/her platform? Where can I find more information? Campaigns are all about getting your message out to as many people as possible and building a positive brand of the STF policy and t-shirts can give you the kind of grassroots exposure your campus may need.



**COFFEE SLEEVES:** For campuses with a coffee shop on site, consider working with the store manager in personalizing coffee sleeves with policy messaging.



**PARKING STICKERS:** Stickers placed on parking payment machines with a campus' branded logo can be an effective way of reminding the campus community that the use of any tobacco products is not allowed in parking lots.

**PARKING PASSES:** STF policy printed directly on daily campus guest parking passes, student passes, and staff/faculty passes.

**NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION AND ADMISSION:** STF policy information included on new student orientation packets and acceptance of admissions notices for incoming students



*The recommendations in this guide are based on health promotion literature and learned experiences from college campuses who have tried many adaptations of STF signage. A comprehensive and thoughtful approach to providing sufficient and effective signage is a key component of educating and raising awareness of a STF campus policy. The California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN) is dedicated to supporting our campus partners with the tools necessary to implement a successful signage campaign; however, it is ultimately up to each campus to choose the type of signage that works best for their campus and available resources.*

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**



**California  
Youth  
Advocacy  
Network**

(916) 339-3424

[info@cyanonline.org](mailto:info@cyanonline.org)

[www.catobaccofreecolleges.org](http://www.catobaccofreecolleges.org)