



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday March 4th, 2025, Peterborough

Smoke-Free Enforcement at Local Arenas

Residents Reminded No Smoking or Vaping on Rec Centre Property

Under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA), it is illegal to smoke or vape on the property or within 20 metres of all community recreation facilities, such as arenas, in Ontario. While this law has been unchanged since 2018, community members often benefit from periodic reminders. In January, Peterborough Public Health (PPH) shared [a letter](#) with all municipal recreation managers to be sent to all facilities' user groups regarding SFOA legislation and resources.

Additionally, over the past four weeks, Tobacco Enforcement Officers (TEOs) from PPH have visited 14 community recreation facilities within the region. In that time, TEOs have engaged in 40 educational conversations and given 22 warnings. As part of a progressive enforcement campaign, the TEOs will be escalating to issuing tickets immediately. So far, one ticket has been issued for smoking at a local arena this year. Under the SFOA, the fine for a first offence of smoking or vaping on arena property is \$305. TEOs have observed that while overall compliance remains high, there has been an increase in the number of people vaping instead of smoking cigarettes compared to previous years. It's important for the public to understand that both smoking and vaping are prohibited.

Smoke- and vape-free spaces offer many benefits to individuals and the community. The vast majority (about 90%) of Ontarians do not smoke, yet secondhand smoke or vapour can put everyone at risk. Secondhand vapour contains several heavy metals and ultrafine particles that are dangerous to inhale, and there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke or vapour. Smoke- and vape-free spaces also support social norms to prevent smoking and vaping; youth, are particularly susceptible to thinking of smoking as "normal", acceptable behaviour when they are exposed to it often and in various settings. Among those who do smoke, nearly half report wanting to quit; smoke-free spaces have been shown to help people with their quit attempts.

Ontario Health Units take a progressive enforcement approach to the SFOA starting with warnings and then progressing to charges if the behaviour is not corrected. In 2024, one charge and 24 warnings were issued for violations under the SFOA at beaches, parks, and the hospital property. Residents can report smoking or vaping violations by calling 705-743-1000 or online at www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/report-secondhand-smoke-vapour.

Further details on the SFOA and benefits of smoke-free spaces can be found at www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/sfoa.

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