

Smoke-free legislation and Church Buildings

In England a ban on smoking in enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places will come into force on 1 July 2007 (2 April 2007 in Wales). This will be particularly relevant for churches that run coffee shops or cafes but will apply to all church premises. 'Substantially enclosed' is defined as premises with a ceiling or roof unless more than half of the walled area is open to the outside (excluding windows and doors). Indoor designated smoking areas will no longer be permitted and the legislation will also apply to work vehicles that are used by more than one person.

The smoke-free legislation imposes an obligation to display a 'no smoking' sign prominently at each public entrance to the premises. This must:

- be a rectangle no less than A5 in size
- display the international no smoking symbol (a burning cigarette in a red circle with a red bar across it) and
- state 'No Smoking. It is against the law to smoke in these premises.'

All churches will need to comply with the signage requirements.

Signs can be ordered from the Smokefree England information line on 0800 169 1697 or downloaded from www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/files/a5_sign_sf_premises.pdf.

Alternatively churches can design and print their own no-smoking signs as long as they meet the minimum requirements. You can personalise your signs by changing the words 'these premises' to refer to the name or type of premises - such as 'this church'.

Further information is available at the Department of Health's Smokefree website www.smokefreeengland.co.uk where a government guide to the new law can be viewed: www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/files/everything_u_need_new_sf_law.pdf.