

Be mindful of smoke-free places throughout Peel

In recognition of National Non-Smoking Week (Jan. 17 to 23), Peel Public Health reminds all residents of current smoking restrictions that help protect the health of residents in the region.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits anyone from smoking or holding lighted tobacco in various places, including enclosed workplaces, meaning workplace vehicles, office buildings, trailer offices on a construction site, loading docks and delivery trucks; enclosed public places, including shopping malls, common areas of apartment buildings and condominiums, and bingo and billiard halls; restaurant and bar patios; within 20 metres of playground areas and outdoor sporting areas like splash pads, soccer fields and skating rinks; school property; in vehicles when children younger than 16 are present; and reserved seating areas of sports arenas and entertainment venues.

The Peel Outdoor Smoking Bylaw additionally prohibits smoking within nine metres of the entrances and exits to municipally-owned and occupied buildings in Peel Region, such as community centres and public libraries.

Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in Canada and Peel Region, and has long been linked to heart disease, stroke, chronic lung disease and cancer; most notably lung cancer, Associate Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh said. These health risks apply both to smokers and individuals exposed to second-hand smoke.

In Peel, 11 per cent of residents (aged 12 and older) are current smokers. The highest smoking prevalence is seen in males aged 19 to 59. Despite prohibitions against smoking in workplaces, 11 per cent or 113,500 adults report being exposed to second-hand smoke at work, and 15,500 report being exposed to second-hand smoke inside workplace vehicles.

While Peel Public Health is responsible for enforcing smoking restrictions, we rely on residents to play their part by reporting non-compliance with smoking restrictions, Loh commented. Working together, we can protect the health of our community by reducing the harms of tobacco smoking and second-hand smoke throughout the region.

To report smoking in prohibited areas or to learn more about smoking restrictions, visit peelregion.ca/health or call 905-799-7700. Anyone found smoking or holding lighted tobacco in a prohibited area may be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000.

For support to quit smoking, contact the Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 or visit www.smokershelpline.ca/

National Non-Smoking Week was established in 1977 by the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control to educate Canadians about the dangers of smoking; to prevent people from beginning to smoke; to help people quit smoking; to promote the right of individuals to breathe air unpolluted by tobacco smoke; to denormalize the tobacco industry, tobacco industry marketing practices, tobacco products and tobacco use; and to assist in the attainment of a smoke-free society in Canada.