



Dental offices as 100% smoke-free spaces

Los consultorios dentales como espacios 100% libres de humo de tabaco

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INTRODUCTION

According to figures from the Global Adult Smoking Survey (GATS) recorded in 2015, 8.4% of total mortality in Mexico is a consequence of diseases caused by tobacco use,¹ and is strongly linked to myocardial infarctions, strokes, chronic bronchitis, pulmonary emphysema as well as lung, bronchial, tracheal and oral mucosal cancers. This is why smoking is considered one of the main public health problems in our country.

The presence of carcinogens and other toxic substances in tobacco smoke is a known fact, and the causal relationship between tobacco and a range of deadly and disabling diseases has been scientifically proven.

After lighting a cigarette, two streams of smoke are created, one produced by the burning of tobacco and the role of the cigarette (mainstream smoke) and another that runs the entire length of the cigarette being inhaled by the smoker (side-stream smoke).² The latter is also known as secondhand smoke and is the stream of smoke inhaled by non-smokers, also known as passive smokers or involuntary smokers who are near active smokers. Passive smoking violates the right to health protection of non-smokers, who must protect themselves against this harmful form of environmental pollution.

Given that smoking is a voluntary and optional habit, there are people who do not wish to be exposed to the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. Therefore, the General Law for Tobacco Control (GLTC) was issued by the Congress of the Union in 2008 with the aim of protecting the health of the smoking and non-smoking population through the creation of regulations that prohibit smoking in public places, The implementation of programs that encourage people to quit smoking, as well as the reduction of tobacco industry advertising, is clearly stated in Articles 51 to 65 of said law.³

The Ministry of Health is responsible for regulating, communicating and verifying compliance with regulations related to tobacco control through the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks (COFEPRIS) and the National Council against

Addictions (CONADIC). However, the legislation that controls everything related to tobacco is multiple, among the most important are the General Health Law, the General Law for Tobacco Control, the regulations for Health Control of Products and Services and the Official Mexican Norm NOM-028-SSA2-2009 for the prevention, treatment and addiction control.

Dental offices as tobacco smoke-free spaces

Dentists, as health promoters, are obliged to forbid anyone to smoke inside the office, inviting them to put out their cigarette before entering.

However, for an office to be recognized as a tobacco smoke-free space, the use and burning of any tobacco product must be prohibited inside the office, and there must be an ashtray at the entrance with a sign that reads as follows: «Put out your cigarette or any other tobacco product before entering», in addition to ensuring that there is no smoking area inside the building, have signs or logos clearly visible to the public that it is prohibited to smoke in that place and in turn contain the telephone numbers of the competent authorities to which you can file a complaint for non-compliance. Finally, it is necessary that there are no smoking areas within the limits of the establishment, nor in the parking lot or terraces thereof. For legal purposes and in accordance with section 53 of the said law, the person responsible for verifying and enforcing the smoke-free environment is the owner or person in charge of the property, requesting the person to stop smoking and leave the 100% smoke-free area, if he or

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Table I. The evaluation certificate checks if the establishment fulfills the minimum necessary conditions to be considered as a 100% smoke-free space.

Is there any program in the building for protection from exposure to tobacco smoke?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Is there any dissemination of this program?	Yes(2)	No (0)
Do managers and middle management know about the program?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Do employees know about the program?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Are users and visitors informed that smoking is not allowed inside the property?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Are there a «Please put out your cigarette before you come in» sign or something similar, as well as an ashtray at the entrance of the building?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Are there any signs or visual symbols that indicate that smoking is prohibited?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Are there any signs of tobacco use in the property, such as ashtrays, lighters, cigarette butts, cigarette butts, smoke smell or people smoking?	Yes (2)	No (5)
Are smokers offered specialized care to quit smoking?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Is there any monitoring or supervision system in place to ensure compliance with the Smoke Exposure Protection Program?	Yes (2)	No (0)
Is tobacco sold in the property?	Yes (0)	No (1)
Are there mechanisms for reporting non-compliance with the Program for Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke?	Yes (2)	No (0)

she is resistant, it is possible to inform the authority so that it may take appropriate measures.³

In addition, the dentist's role as a health promoter is not only to prohibit smoking within the office, but also to make patients aware of the negative consequences of smoking on their oral and general health through informative talks, distribution of leaflets or presentation of posters in the waiting room.

In order to know whether an establishment may be objectively called a 100% smoke-free area, an evaluation certificate has been created that can be applied and is expressed in *table I*. In order to know this, it is necessary to record the values according to the conditions found in the building, if after the summation the value amounts to 26, it can be considered that it complies with the minimum conditions established to be as a 100% smoke-free area.

In addition, the Ministry of Health grants the responsibility for regulation, control and promotion of health to the Federal Commission for Protection against Health Risks (COFEPRIS), which is obliged to evaluate potential risks to human health and impose sanctions and security measures if they exist,⁴ and article 80 of the GLTC states that violations of this law shall be administratively sanctioned by COFEPRIS.

CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned above, the effects produced by the inhalation of tobacco smoke are extremely harmful, and therefore, dental offices must at all times adhere to the regulations established by law to avoid being sanctioned for endangering the health of their patients by allowing the environment to be contaminated with tobacco smoke. By official disposition there must be an ashtray at the entrance of the office, as well as signs indicating that smoking is prohibited inside.

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