

November 25, 2008

Questions & Answers for Foster Parents

Frequently Asked Questions about the Smoke-Free Environment Policy

Q1: What does a smoke-free environment mean?

A smoke-free environment means no smoking in the home and no smoking in the vehicle. The policy does not apply to the use of tobacco for cultural or traditional purposes.

Q2: Can I smoke in my home or vehicle when foster children are not around?

No. A smoke-free environment means that there can be no smoking at any time in the home or vehicle. We know that even after a cigarette is extinguished, harmful second-hand smoke clings to carpets, curtains, furniture and car upholstery.

Q3: I am a foster parent and I smoke, but I never smoke in my home or in my vehicle. Do I have to quit smoking?

No.

Q4: Does this rule apply to the foster children in my home?

The smoke-free environment policy applies to everyone living in and/or visiting your home. The foster child or children are also expected to comply with the policy.

Q5: My existing Family Care Home (FCH) Agreement makes no mention of the requirement to provide a smoke-free environment. Does my agreement have to be renewed to reflect the policy?

When your FCH Agreement comes up for renewal, the new agreement will contain a clause requiring you to provide a smoke-free environment. While you will not be under a contractual obligation to provide a smoke-free environment until your FCH Agreement contains the clause, it is the expectation of the ministry that caregivers comply with the smoke-free policy.

Q6: What kind of support is available if I decide I want to quit smoking?

There are many supports available through QuitNow, a free 24-hour service operated by the BC Lung Association on behalf of the Ministry of Health. QuitNow (www.quitnow.ca) is an internet-based program providing tools, expert advice, e-mail support, and chat lines to help you successfully stop smoking. QuitNow also provides a telephone counselling service available 24/7 and staffed by registered nurses toll-free at 1 877 455-2233.