

	BEDFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & RESCUE Administrative Policy	
	Discipline: Administration	DATE: May 8, 2023
	Reference Number: FR 14-9	
	APPROVED BY: Chief Janet Blankenship	
	SUBJECT: Tobacco and Vaping Policy	

Background:

Tobacco use, either by smoking or smokeless tobacco, has been proven to be a health hazard. Secondhand smoke from smoking and/or vaping can be a hazard to your co-workers and any other people in close proximity. Smokeless tobacco lends itself to using bottles or trash cans to spit the tobacco juice in, creating a hygiene and cleanliness issue to personnel using the receptacles or handling the bottles. All employees have the right to work in a tobacco and vape free workplace.

Purpose:

To develop a policy to ensure a safe, tobacco and vape free environment for personnel, guests, and visitors to BCoFR facilities and vehicles. This policy also applies to tobacco use or vaping while in BCoFR vehicles and/or on any call for service.

Scope:

This policy applies to all BCoFR personnel.

Virginia Heart and Lung Act:

The Virginia Heart and Lung Act states if you are diagnosed with heart disease, lung disease, or hypertension an employee is entitled by Virginia Code Section 65.2-402 to a presumption that their occupation caused their disease. Smoking, tobacco use and/or vaping could jeopardize an employee's workers comp claim under an occupational disease or illness claim. One could argue it was caused by their own actions (tobacco use or vaping) and not employment.

Procedure/Requirements:

Smoking, vaping and/or smokeless tobacco (dipping, chewing) in any form shall be limited to the areas of apparatus bays or outside of any BCoFR buildings. No smoking, vaping and/or smokeless tobacco shall be used in any living quarters, general living area, BCoFR vehicles, training activities or active incidents. Any residual tobacco products shall be disposed of properly.

Volunteer Facilities:

Volunteer facilities may have different policies for their members, each BCoFR employee shall adhere to this policy. If the volunteer station you are assigned to has a policy prohibiting tobacco and /or vaping use in any areas, you are to adhere to the policy of that organization.

Disciplinary Actions:

If an employee is seen or reported as violating this policy, progressive discipline as outlined in the Bedford County Personnel Policy Manual will be utilized.