

WHO POLICY ON NON-RECRUITMENT OF SMOKERS OR OTHER TOBACCO USERS:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who is a "smoker"?

According to WHO's Smoking and Tobacco Use Policy, a smoker is someone who smokes any tobacco product, either daily or occasionally.

A *daily smoker* is someone who smokes any tobacco product at least once a day.

An *occasional smoker* is someone who smokes, but not every day.

A "tobacco user" is someone who uses any tobacco product.

2. What does the term "tobacco use" mean?

Tobacco use includes smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing any tobacco product.

3. What is a "tobacco product"?

"*Tobacco products* means products entirely or partly made of the leaf tobacco as raw material which are manufactured to be used for smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing". (WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Article 1)

4. Why has WHO decided not to recruit smokers or other tobacco users?

Tobacco use is the major preventable cause of death in the world, killing nearly 5 million people annually. On current trends, by 2020, around 10 million people a year will die from tobacco-related diseases in developing countries alone, accounting for more deaths than from malaria, maternal conditions and injuries combined. Tobacco use is addictive. There is no safe way of using tobacco. No safe threshold levels have been established. This means that substances in tobacco and tobacco smoke may cause harm even at low levels of exposure. WHO is at the forefront of the global campaign to curb the tobacco epidemic. The Organization has a responsibility to ensure that this is reflected in all its work, including in its recruitment practices and in the image projected by the Organization and its staff members.

5. Does this mean WHO will stop recruiting people who do not have a healthy lifestyle?

No, but WHO encourages its staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In the case of tobacco, the importance for WHO not to be seen as "normalizing" tobacco use also warrants consideration in the Organization's recruitment policy.

6. Has WHO banned smoking by staff members?

Smoking inside all WHO premises has been banned and many offices have also banned smoking on outdoor premises. Designated outdoor areas where smoking is tolerated will remain in place until further notice in those offices that have made such arrangements.

7. What is WHO doing to help serving staff to quit smoking?

WHO encourages staff who smoke or use tobacco to quit. Several measures are in place to assist staff members to stop using tobacco. WHO's Health and Medical Services (HMS), Geneva, provide support for cessation of tobacco use in the form of individual counselling, prescriptions for pharmaceutical therapy (including nicotine replacement products) and follow-up. In-house sessions for groups within WHO can be organized.

HMS also has an established cooperation with facilities offering specialized services, including CIPRET (Centre d'Information pour la Prévention du Tabagisme) and the Hôpital Cantonal.

Pharmaceutical therapy (including nicotine replacement products) bought on a treating physician or on the Headquarters or Regional Office staff physician prescriptions are reimbursed by the WHO Staff Health Insurance at 80%.

8. Does this policy of not recruiting smokers or other tobacco users apply to serving staff (both fixed-term and temporary)?

No. The policy states that smokers or other tobacco users will not be "recruited" by WHO. Since serving staff have already been recruited and are already in WHO's employ, the policy will not affect them. If a currently serving staff member were to leave WHO and later seek to return to work for WHO, the policy would apply.

9. Will WHO take disciplinary action against serving staff members who continue to smoke or use tobacco?

No, unless of course a staff member were to persist in smoking or using other tobacco products on WHO premises.

10. How will WHO determine whether a person who applies to work for WHO is a smoker or tobacco user?

The following questions will be included in the online application form:

- "Do you smoke or use tobacco products?"
- "If you currently smoke or use tobacco products, would you continue to do so if employed by WHO?"

If the answer to both questions is "yes", the applicant will not be considered for selection.

11. If an applicant says they do not use tobacco on the application form, but in fact they do - what action will WHO take?

The same action as would be taken when any false information is provided on an application: the person would not be hired or, if recruited, disciplinary action would be taken against the staff member.

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