



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

Health and Safety Branch

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ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

OPCW NON-SMOKING POLICY

In recent years, researchers and health authorities all over the world have clearly established that tobacco smoke is a dangerous environmental pollutant. There is also mounting evidence that its inhalation by those who do not smoke is detrimental to their health, the phenomenon which has become known as “passive” or “second-hand” smoking. Tobacco smoke can be recirculated through the ventilation system in a closed environment, leading to pollution of the working environment. Exposure to such environmental tobacco smoke is the leading cause of ill health due to passive smoking.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has expressed its concerns about the involuntary exposure of people to tobacco smoke in the workplace, and has issued a statement in order to protect the fundamental rights of non-smokers to breathe healthy air, free from pollutants, at their workplace. At the forty sixth World Health Assembly, WHO called upon the international organisations of the United Nations system to prohibit tobacco smoking on their premises (resolution WHA 46.8).

As an employer, the OPCW fully recognises its responsibilities for employee health and welfare, and has a moral obligation to provide a healthy work environment for its staff. With this in mind, the OPCW headquarters building has been declared a non-smoking building. In addition, smoking has been entirely prohibited in all other OPCW workplaces and vehicles, including all facilities and/or vehicles leased by the OPCW.

A smoking area for the headquarters building has been designated in the garden located just outside the Delegates' lounge. Benches and ash trays have been provided. For security and access control reasons, the only access to the garden will be through the door in the lounge, and the same door should be used to re-enter the building. The garden area should not be left by any other route.

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