

San Mateo County

No Smoking Within County Parks, Beaches, or Trails Ordinance

Frequently Asked Questions

San Mateo County has adopted an amendment to San Mateo County Ordinance Code Section 4.96.040 that prohibits smoking within any area, including public parking areas, of County owned or maintained beaches, parks, and trails. This ordinance became effective March 15, 2007. To help County park visitors understand the ordinance, this set of answers to frequently asked questions has been prepared.

What parks are covered by this ordinance?

Only San Mateo County owned or maintained parks including, but not limited to: Coyote Point Park, Coyote Point Marina, Crystal Springs Regional Trail, Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Flood Park, Huddart Park, Junipero Serra Park, Memorial/Pescadero Park, Mirada Surf, Sanchez Adobe, Sam McDonald Park, San Bruno Mountain Park, San Pedro Valley Park, Woodside Store, and Wunderlich Park. The ordinance does not apply to Federal, State, City or Special District parks or trails.

Why was this ordinance adopted?

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopted this ordinance because exposure to environmental tobacco smoke commonly known as secondhand smoke, or passive smoke, has been shown to cause lung cancer in adults and respiratory problems in children. Also, the County Health Officer recognizes that outdoor secondhand smoke can expose nonsmokers to toxic particulate concentrations, which contribute to disease and/or aggravate existing illnesses.

In addition to the well-documented health hazards, according to the United States Fire Administration, smoking is the third leading cause of wildfires in the United States and it causes 8% of all outdoor fires. Cigarette butts also constitute a significant portion of the trash left in beaches and parks. These cigarette butts as well as used matches not only constitute a substantial source of environmental pollution, but more importantly create a health hazard to children who play in the sand and may ingest such debris.

Can I smoke in my car?

No. The ordinance prohibits smoking while in a County Park whether one is inside a vehicle or not.

Can I smoke in any building or structure in a County Park?

No. Smoking is prohibited in any structure in the park including, but not limited to, shelter buildings, concession buildings, historic buildings, and restrooms.

Can I smoke in my tent if I am camping?

No. The ordinance prohibits smoking while in a County Park whether one is inside a tent or not.

Can I smoke in or on my boat in the Coyote Point Marina?

No. The ordinance prohibits smoking while in the Coyote Point Marina whether one is inside/on a boat or not.

Can I smoke in my motor home?

No. The ordinance prohibits smoking while in a County Park whether one is inside a motor home or not.

Does the ordinance cover just smoking cigarettes?

No. The ordinance defines smoking as inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted cigar, pipe, cigarette, tobacco product or plant.

What do I need to do if I am visiting one of the County parks and want to smoke?

You will need to leave the Park to smoke. If you are leaving the park in a vehicle, *be sure to advise the Park Ranger at the gatehouse that you are leaving so you can immediately reenter the park without paying another entry fee.*

I made a reservation for a site in a County park before this No Smoking Ordinance was adopted and I have smokers in my group. What do I do?

The San Mateo County Park Department will be offering full refunds with no cancellation charge for all reservations made prior to March 15, 2007 for people who need to make other arrangements. This refund will be available for a period of three months (until June 15, 2007) by calling the Parks Reservation Desk at 650.363.4021 or coming to our Administrative Office at 455 County Center, 4th Floor, Redwood City, CA.

What is the fine for violation of the no smoking ordinance?

The San Mateo County Parks Department hopes to enforce the ban on smoking through education and voluntary compliance. If necessary, park privileges may be revoked or a citation may be issued. For a first violation the fine is not to exceed \$100, for a second violation the fine is not to exceed \$200, and for each additional violation a fine not to exceed \$500.

Who does this smoking ban apply to?

The No Smoking Ordinance applies to all persons who are in a County park or on a County trail or beach, or in a park area managed by the County. This includes park visitors, program and special event participants, trail and beach users, County employees, contractors, utility workers, delivery people, park volunteer staff, and activity leaders.

Where can I read the actual language of the ordinance?

On the Internet at: <http://municipalcodes.lexisnexis.com/codes/sanmateo/index.htm> or at the San Mateo County Law Library, 170 Hamilton Street, Redwood City, CA 94063

Who can I contact if I have other questions about this No Smoking Ordinance?

E-mail us at: ParksandRecreation@co.sanmateo.ca.us

Write us at: San Mateo County Parks Department
455 County Center, 4th Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063
Attn: No Smoking Ordinance

Call us at : 650.363.4020