



## City of Meriden: Tobacco Free Park and Recreation Areas



**Effective July 1, 2016, smoking and the use of all tobacco products, including chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other electronic devices will not be allowed in City of Meriden owned parks and recreation areas\*  
(City Code, Chapter 151).**

### **Why do we need tobacco free parks?**

**A tobacco free ordinance is in the best interest of Meriden's residents and park visitors, especially young children.** Public parks and recreation areas, such as walking trails and ball parks, are designed to promote active and healthy living and tobacco use has no place in these environments. We have dog leash laws and laws against drinking in public designed to promote a safe and healthy environment. Tobacco-free ordinances do the same, while also sending a message to children that tobacco use is unhealthy and unacceptable.

### **Why worry about people smoking?**

**Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability and death in our city and state.** In Connecticut almost 20% of adults use some form of tobacco, while rates among youth range from 12 – 28% in grades 9 – 12. In a recent survey, 34% of Meriden adults reported smoking daily. The rates of e-cigarette use and vaping pens are rising, and are not a healthy substitute for traditional tobacco products.

### **Why ban smoking outside?**

**The Surgeon General has declared that there is no safe level of second hand smoke;** even small amounts can trigger allergies, asthma attacks and other breathing problems. Second hand smoke contains 7,000 chemicals with 70 known to be cancer causing agents. When outdoors, smoke can be smelled up to 23 feet away, allowing others nearby to inhale toxic chemicals.

### **What about large community festivals and special events?**

The Director of Parks and Recreation may have a designated smoking area for large events.

### **Who will enforce this new law?**

A Meriden Police Officer can issue a citation to any person violating this law. Other city employees and/or sports officials will be reminding park users of the new law. We also need your help in telling friends and family that tobacco use is no longer allowed in our park and recreation areas.

### **What happens if I use tobacco where it is banned?**

A warning shall be issued for the first offense. After that, **finest may range from \$25 to \$99.**

### **Where can I get help to quit smoking or the use of other tobacco products?**

The state of Connecticut offers a free quitline – please call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit their website at <https://www.quitnow.net/connecticut/>

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*\*Hunter's Golf Course is excluded from this ordinance.*