

Guidelines for Smoke-Free Parks in Yokosuka

Introduction

The city of Yokosuka is promoting the creation of an environment in which parks can be used safely and comfortably. In recent years, as health damage caused by secondhand smoking has become a social issue, improving parks' environment and etiquette to prevent secondhand smoking in municipal parks is vital for preserving the health of residents.

These guidelines were created based on the smoking situation in city parks and the opinions of users, and they aim to prevent health repercussions caused by secondhand smoking while also creating an environment in which everyone who uses the parks can do so comfortably.

1. Background and Purpose of the Guidelines

The City of Yokosuka conducted a surveyed park users in order to prevent secondhand smoking and create a comfortable park environment for the local community. The results of the survey were as follows:

- In large parks, both smokers and non-smokers had a very high level of understanding of designated smoking areas, and there were also requests to improve the quality of smoking spaces.
- In small local parks, there were complaints of discomfort caused by smoke and litter from smoking. Many respondents expressed a desire for smoking to be prohibited.
- In small local parks, although most smokers made efforts to follow smoking etiquette, many non-smokers felt that smokers were not sufficiently observing etiquette. There were also many responses that described that cigarette smoke and smell were unpleasant.
- In many small local parks, a main reason for smoking was that there were no smoking areas nearby.

Taking these points into account, the City of Yokosuka has determined that it is necessary to establish clear no-smoking rules and issue guidance for the following purposes:

- Ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for park use
- Preventing health damage caused by secondhand smoking
- Promoting proper smoking etiquette among smokers
- Preventing trouble among users and fostering mutual understanding

2. Scope of Application

These guidelines apply to all parks managed by the City of Yokosuka. Smoking rules, including those about heated tobacco products, will be established according to each park's size and usage, and the city will provide clear information to park users about these rules.

3. Basic Approach to Smoking in Parks

To prevent secondhand smoking, prevent fires, stop litter from cigarette butts, and create an environment where children can use parks safely, smoking is now, in principle, completely prohibited in parks, except for those listed in the “List of Parks with Designated Smoking Areas.”

Exceptional:

- If deemed particularly necessary, such as during events, a temporary smoking area may be set up, provided that the considerations required under the Health Promotion Act are observed.
- For parks listed in the “List of Parks with Designated Smoking Areas”, smoking is permitted only in smoking areas based on past usage conditions and other factors. Smoking outside of those designated areas is prohibited.

4. Measures to Improve Smoking Etiquette

Improving smoking etiquette is essential to ensuring parks remain comfortable and well maintained. The following measures will therefore be implemented:

- Notices will be posted in parks and shared on the city website and social media to promote the “no-smoking principle” and provide a “map of nearby designated smoking areas” to ensure that smokers in small parks are properly directed to designated smoking areas,
- In parks that have designated smoking areas, the area’s location and rules will be clearly indicated.
- The city will raise awareness about the prevention of secondhand smoking and the importance consideration for others through posters and other informational materials.

5. Response to Violations

Users who do not comply with smoking etiquette and smoking rules in parks will be addressed as follows:

- Users smoking in completely smoke-free parks or outside the designated smoking areas within parks will be instructed based on the *Basic Approach to Smoking in Parks* in Section 3.
- Users who litter with cigarette butts will be provided guidance in accordance with the provisions of the “Urban Parks Ordinance” and the “Ordinance for Promoting the Prevention of Littering and Environmental Improvement.”

6. Role of Facility Managers

Facility managers will carry out the following actions and strive to maintain a safe and comfortable environment in parks:

- Regular patrols and monitoring of park users' smoking
- Early detection of and prompt warnings for violations of smoking etiquette and park-use rules
- Installation of clear signs and notices
- Appropriate revision of these guidelines based on surveys and other feedback
- Public awareness activities for these guidelines in cooperation with city-related organizations and local residents

7. Future Issues and Outlook

The City of Yokosuka will continue to assess the effectiveness of these guidelines while working to create an environment free from secondhand smoking through the following efforts:

- Improving the environment to prevent secondhand smoking in smoking areas
- Reviewing and aligning these guidelines in accordance with laws and national policy
- Protecting the health and safety of each resident by creating parks that everyone can use with peace of mind

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List of parks with designated smoking areas

- Chuo Peace Park
- Hamayu Park
- Hikari No Oka Park
- Iriyamazu Park
- Kinugasa Park
- Kurihama Flower Park
- Mikasa Park
- Nagai Seaside Park Soleil Hill
- Natsushima Ground
- Nishi Park
- Oppama Park
- Otsu Park
- Oyabe Midori Park
- Perry Park
- Sahara 2-Chome Park
- Sarushima
- Shiyakusho-Mae Park
- Shonan Village West Park
- Verny-Oguri Park