

Tips for Working with Law Enforcement Agencies

Respect their time.

They have very little of it to spare. Make yourself available according to their schedule.

Keep educational and background materials short and to the point.

Remember, for most law enforcement agencies, their knowledge of tobacco control issues and their experience in enforcing tobacco control laws is limited. Educating and communicating with local law enforcers regularly is key to getting them actively involved in achieving higher compliance rates in all types of tobacco control laws.

Provide samples when needed.

Do the footwork for them by providing sample tools where appropriate, such as complaint forms, warning letters, brochures, fact sheets and tip sheets.

Don't guess at answers. If you don't know, say so and get back to them once you find out.

Through educating and communicating with local law enforcement representatives, relationships are built. Relationships are extremely important in the field of law enforcement. Keep them positive and build a reputation for reliability.

Although tobacco control laws are not number one priority, they are highly visible.

Maintain a balance knowing that tobacco control laws will not surpass the 'front burner' law enforcement issues of murder, rape and other felonious crimes. However, *the community at large can easily see if smoke-free workplace, and point of sale laws are not being enforced.* This "high visibility" makes these laws important to the community.

Keep law enforcement involved with tobacco control issues.

Invite one or more of your local law enforcement representatives, those who seem the most interested and responsive, to become a member of your tobacco control coalition.

Say "Thank You" and give public recognition for a job well done.

If your local law enforcement agency is doing a good job of enforcing tobacco control laws, reward them and find unique ways to thank them. Pictures in newsletters, "thank you" letters to their superiors, recognition by your local public health officer or AHA, ALA or ACS offices would be welcomed gestures.

BREATH can provide the names and phone numbers of experienced **Tobacco Control Enforcement Resource Officers** who can assist newer enforcement officers with information and share their knowledge about implementing the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law, LC6404.5; PC 308 and other tobacco control laws.

"We want to work together with community organizations and our work is enhanced when we better understand each other's roles." Officer Kelly Gordon, Montebello, Police Department

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