

Georgian will be smoking-free May 6: Frequently asked questions

Georgian recognizes the health hazards associated with smoking and second-hand smoke exposure. As a result, the college is implementing a smoking-free environment on all of its properties, effective May 6, 2019. There will be no smoking on Georgian property, whether you work, visit or study at any of our campuses or locations.

Here are common questions you've been asking – and their answers. You can also view the new procedure and access smoking cessation resources and supports at GeorgianCollege.ca/smokingfree.

Why has Georgian decided to go smoking-free?

We care about you and your health. Medical evidence confirms second-hand smoke is a health hazard. Our decision to go smoking-free reflects our commitment to provide a clean, healthy and safe environment in which to work and learn.

Are other places smoking-free?

Smoking is prohibited in most public places. For example, under the [Smoke Free Ontario Act](#) hospitals, restaurants and public playgrounds are all smoke-free. Elementary and secondary school properties are also 100 per cent smoke-free under this legislation. Colleges and universities across the Canada have or are going smoking-free as well.

What are the benefits of being a smoking-free college?

A healthier environment for everyone – and a cleaner and safer property and planet!

When does the new procedure take effect?

Monday, May 6, 2019.

Who does this procedure apply to?

Everyone – staff, students, contractors and visitors at all Georgian locations in Ontario, with the exception of student residences owned and operated by Campus Living Centres and the Indigenous Services department (both have their own policies or procedures).

Where on Georgian grounds does the procedure apply?

You can't smoke anywhere on Georgian property – it applies to all campuses and locations.

What about events, outdoor activities or varsity games at the sports field?

The procedure still applies. You can't smoke anywhere on Georgian property.

What does smoking include?

Smoking includes the burning, inhaling, exhaling, or vaping of any product or use of any device including but not limited to cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, or vaporizers and includes the use of chewing tobacco.

Can I smoke inside my vehicle parked at the college?

No. You can't smoke anywhere on Georgian property.

Where can I smoke?

You'll have to smoke off site. Please be respectful of our campus neighbours and dispose of tobacco-related materials appropriately. Don't litter!

Why can't Georgian continue to have outdoor designated smoking areas?

There are health hazards associated with smoking and second-hand smoke exposure. We want Georgian to be a clean, healthy and safe environment for everyone.

Isn't smoking my personal right?

Smoking is a personal choice. Our procedure doesn't take away your right to choose to smoke. It simply prohibits smoking on college property. It's about creating a healthier campus for all not about forcing you to quit.

Do I have to quit smoking?

No. It's your choice to continue smoking. There are [smoking cessation supports and resources](#) in place should you wish to quit or reduce your consumption.

What do I do if I smoke then?

- Plan your visits to Georgian and allow time to smoke off site.
- Get help to quit or cut back by [accessing local smoking cessation supports](#).
- Find ways to manage your cravings so your time at the college won't be impacted.

Can I use nicotine replacement therapy products on campus?

Yes. You can use cessation aids like patches, gum or lozenges.

What can I do instead of smoking while at Georgian?

There are many ways to manage your cravings. In addition to using cessation aids like patches, gum or lozenges, here are a few strategies to try while on college property:

- **Get out in nature.** Grab some fresh air and clear your head.
- **Take a walk.** Stroll the hallways or venture outside.
- **Stretch.** It's great for stress relief, can increase blood flow and calm your mind.

- **Breathe.** Sit somewhere quiet and take five to 10 long, deep breaths.
- **Enjoy a mindful moment.** Take in the sights, sounds and smells around you. If you have headphones, you could listen to a guided meditation.
- **Read or watch something inspiring.** Check out a TED Talk or interesting article online.
- **Write down your thoughts.** Reflect on the day. Journal what you're grateful for. Or make a plan for what you need to do when you get home.
- **Grab some water.** Hydration has a large impact on energy levels and brain function.
- **Tune it out.** There are tons of benefits to listening to music, but mostly it will make you feel good. Find a place where you can zone out for a bit.
- **Talk to someone.** Find a kind and empathetic ear. Share what you're going through and ask for support.

Smoking relieves my anxiety and stress. Can I be accommodated?

There are healthier and more effective ways to manage anxiety or stress. If you're a Georgian student, we encourage you to book a [free and confidential appointment with a college](#) counsellor to discuss tools, strategies and support. [Employees can access EAP](#). There are [cessation resources](#) in place for both students and employees should you wish to quit smoking or reduce your consumption too.

I'm addicted to smoking. How do you expect me to not smoke while at Georgian?

We recognize it will be difficult transition and hard for many to manage their cravings while at the college. It's why we announced we'll be smoking-free well in advance and put [resources in place for both employees and students](#) so they could plan ahead. We encourage you to take advantage of supports available and to use cessation aids like patches, gum or lozenges when at the college.

Will class or work time be adjusted to accommodate people who want to go off site for a smoke break?

No.

Will I be penalized for taking longer than my break in class or at work because I went off site to smoke?

Students are required to meet all learning outcomes and employees are expected to follow their respective collective agreement or the Employment Standards Act. Smoke breaks can't impact your studies or your work at the college.

What about the safety of those who choose to smoke and have to go off site, especially at night?

Those who go off campus to smoke are at no greater risk than those who choose to go off campus for other reasons, e.g., to get a coffee. If you don't want to go off site at night, we recommend you use cessation aids like patches, gum or lozenges. If you do choose to go off property, here are some general safety tips from Campus Security:

- Always be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.
- Trust your gut and leave uncomfortable situations.

- Don't wear headphones and use well-lit, regularly travelled sidewalks and walkways.
- Avoid shortcuts and keep away from shrubbery or bushes.
- Don't walk and talk or walk and text.
- Don't go anywhere alone at night.

I want help to quit or reduce how much I smoke. Where do I go?

Visit GeorgianCollege.ca/smokingfree to get started.

Do my student or employee health benefits cover the cost of smoking cessation programs?

There are free smoking cessation supports in place for you that we encourage you to access. Get started at GeorgianCollege.ca/smokingfree.

I'm not a student or employee but a community member who visits Georgian. Where can I access cessation supports?

There are likely cessation resources and supports in your community – for example, your local health unit. You may wish to talk to your doctor or local health care provider. Here are a few other helpful resources:

- [Leave the Pack Behind](#)
- [CAMH Pathways to Change](#)
- [STOP program \(offered through local health units\)](#)
- [The Lung Association](#)
- smokefree.gov
- smokershelpline.ca
- dontquitquitting.ca

Where can I send a colleague or friend who needs cessation support?

Point them to GeorgianCollege.ca/smokingfree and share the above websites. There are resources on both the employee and student portals.

What do I do if I see someone smoking on Georgian property?

If you feel comfortable, kindly inform them of our new procedure. If you notice a persistent issue or are uncomfortable approaching the person, you could contact Campus Security at 705.728.1968, ext. 6111 or campussafetyservices@georgiancollege.ca. Campus Security and those with managerial or supervisory responsibilities have [specific obligations outlined in the procedure](#).

Who is going to enforce the procedure?

Campus Security with support from those with managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

What are the penalties if I'm caught smoking on Georgian property?

[See the procedure](#) for specific sanctions for students, employees, contractors and visitors.

Will use of tobacco for Indigenous ceremonies be allowed?

Sacred tobacco is very different from commercial tobacco use and we honour the unique relationship Indigenous cultures have with traditional and sacred medicines as outlined in the [Smoke Free Ontario Act](#).

Does this procedure apply to cannabis?

The college has a cannabis procedure that addresses federal and provincial legislation related to the recreational use, possession and/or cultivation of cannabis (marijuana). You can find it on the same page as the smoking-free procedure at GeorgianCollege.ca/smokingfree.

What does smoking cessation mean?

Smoking cessation is the process of trying to quit.

Where can I find the legislation this procedure is based on?

In provincial legislation ([see Smoke-Free Ontario Act](#)) and in local municipal and city by-laws.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the procedure?

Please contact Campus Safety Services at 705.728.1968, ext. 6111 or email campussafetyservices@georgiancollege.ca.