

Lawrence Township approves smoking ban in public parks

Phillip Tomlinson/South Jersey Times By **Phillip Tomlinson/South Jersey Times**

On January 23, 2014 at 6:00 AM, updated January 23, 2014 at 8:36 AM

LAWRENCE TWP. — The township committee unanimously adopted an ordinance banning smoking in public parks at its regular January meeting.

The ban takes effect immediately and covers all publicly-owned recreational properties.

Signs will be posted alerting people to the ordinance, and the fines and penalties for non-compliance.

For a first offense, smokers will be subject to a fine of between \$50 and \$100; for a second offense the penalty increases from \$100 to \$200; third and subsequent offenses will be subject to fines ranging from \$200 to \$500.

The ordinance covers all public parks and recreation areas in the township, but is primarily intended to apply to the baseball and softball fields, so as to avoid exposing youngsters to second-hand smoke.

The township committee, along with the township's recreation committee, were all very supportive of the idea, which was brought before the township by the organization Tobacco Free for a Healthy New Jersey.

The anti-smoking group presented the committee with a sample ordinance upon which the adopted measure was based, and has also donated all of the signage which will be posted in all areas covered by the ban.

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