



## Woodstown public parks now smoke-free

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Park visitors face up to \$500 fine if caught smoking any tobacco products, borough officials say. Woodstown Borough Council adopted the new ordinance banning smoking in public parks.

(File Photo)

**WOODSTOWN** — Residents in borough public parks who are caught with a lit cigarette in hand will face up to a \$500 fine, according to a recently adopted ordinance.

The unanimously approved ordinance prohibits smoking in any of the borough's three public parks — Garrison Park, Marvin L. Watson Memorial Park, and Memorial Lake Park.

Additionally, according to officials, the implemented ban includes parking areas due to close proximity to benches where people sit.

"This new ordinance will help protect our children and adults from the harm caused by second-hand smoke. That is especially important protection for

those who have health conditions that are sensitive to second-hand smoke," Woodstown Mayor Don Dietrich said.

Smoking defined in the ordinance is possessing a lit tobacco product including weed/plants or a lit pipe, hookah pipe, cigar or cigarette.

For those who are in the electric cigarette movement, they are no exception to the rule, according to officials.

The ordinance includes the ban of electric cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, dipping tobacco, or any other form in the public parks.

According to the mayor, borough council wanted to be careful when writing the ordinance so that residents' freedoms were not violated, as well as not creating restrictions that were too stringent.

Creating a **smoking** ban first surfaced in **August**, when council discussed the potential benefit of the ordinance.

Councilman Glenn Merkle, member of the recreation and health committee, said the movement was presented in an effort to limit public exposure to second-hand smoke.

Merkle said concerns about public smoking were raised by individual residents and health organizations like MAPSA (Municipal Alliance for Prevention of Substance Abuse.)

The ban on smoking will be enforced by the Woodstown Police Department.

Any person in violation of the ordinance will be subject to a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 90 days.

Non-smoking policies are also enforced in Pennsville which prohibit smoking on athletic fields or sport complexes within the township.

Also, Pilesgrove Township Committee held a brief discussion on the non-smoking ban Tuesday night.

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