



## Don't Just Switch, Quit Tobacco for Good

We know that quitting smoking is the single best thing you can do to improve your health. Don't get confused by unproven claims made by tobacco and e-cigarette companies: quit smoking for good.

### What's the Best Way to Quit Smoking for Good?

Despite what Juul and e-cigarette companies want you to believe, switching to vaping (e-cigarettes) is not quitting smoking. E-cigarettes are still tobacco products, and the FDA has not approved any e-cigarette as a quit-smoking device.

### What are the Facts about E-Cigarettes?

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not found any e-cigarette to be safe and effective in helping smokers quit. The fact is e-cigarettes are tobacco products too.

### What Should I do Instead of Switching to E-Cigarettes?

Talk to your healthcare provider about developing a quit-smoking plan that includes medication plus counseling. Together, this combination results in the highest rates of success in quitting smoking for good.

Using quit-smoking medications that are proven safe and effective such as nicotine gum, patches, nasal spray, inhaler and lozenges, and the non-nicotine medications bupropion (Zyban®) and varenicline (Chantix®) to help relieve physical symptoms. Learn more about these medications and whether your insurance plan may cover them.

### Tobacco Cessation Programs with CommunityCare

CommunityCare covers all over-the-counter and prescription nicotine replacement products and Chantix and Zyban or generic equivalents for members enrolled through their employer group. A prescription is required for over-the-counter nicotine replacement products to be a covered benefit. There is a limit of two covered quit attempts per 365 days. Contact Member Services for more information at (918) 594-4006.

Behavior modification, along with medications, is another way to increase your chances of a successful quit attempt:

CommunityCare members may access the Clear Direction tobacco cessation program offered at the Saint Francis Health Zone. The cost is a \$25 deposit (refundable upon completion of the program) with a physician referral.





Remember, those who seek assistance from their primary care physician are more successful at their quit attempt. For more information, please call (918) 494-8263.

## **Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline**

The trained staff at the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline don't lecture or judge, they simply provide you with the free tools and support available so you can customize your quit experience. From free text and email support, phone, and web coaching, and at least a FREE two-week supply of nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges, registered participants are four times more likely to quit tobacco than those quitting on their own. Call the helpline at 1-800-784-8669, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **Join the Great American Smokeout on November 17**

The American Cancer Society sponsors the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November (November 17), challenging smokers to give up cigarettes for 24 hours. If you or a loved one smokes cigarettes, consider joining the movement, and take the first step toward quitting cigarettes forever! For more information on how to quit smoking call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or follow this link, <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking.html>.





## Updated Job Descriptions and New Progression Programs

On October 19, 2022, the Mayor approved a new city-wide progression and proficiency program for four Office/Technical positions:

- Office Assistant II
- Office Assistant III
- Office Administrator I
- Office Administrator II

This program allows employees to develop and progress from an OT-15 to an OT-17 through training and time in position. The Office Admin II position also has proficiencies built into it, and employees can apply to promote to open OT-18 positions.

Progression programs are one of several programs the City of Tulsa offers to help employees grow and develop in their current job, learning skills and concepts that will allow increased success during their time at the City. This can help improve employee engagement, increase efficiency, and provide advancement opportunities.

Not sure if your job is part of a progression? Click the link below to see all progressions programs offered at the City - (<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/human-resources/employment/job-descriptions/progression-programs/>).

If your job doesn't have a progression and you're considering applying for a promotion, spend some time reviewing the various progression programs offered to see if anything sounds like it would be a good fit.

### Development Training Classes

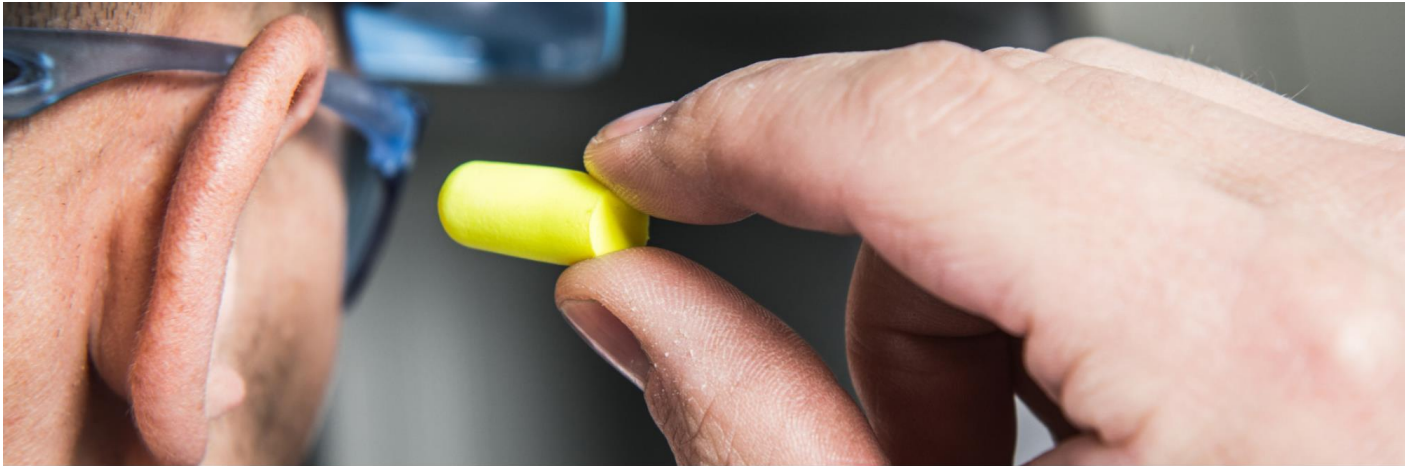
If you are wanting to sharpen your skills, whether you're in a progression program or not, you might be interested in some of the free development training classes listed in the training catalog. These classes are available to all City employees. Get with your supervisor to carve out some time to devote to the development training classes best suited for your career path at the City.



Department management is encouraged to support employee development as much as possible to improve employee engagement and develop future city leaders. Free development training is available on-demand -

<https://www.cityoftulsa.org/city-employees/resources/training-opportunities/>.





## Your Hearing - Once it's Gone, it's Gone

Our hearing is precious to us. Once we diminish or lose our hearing, we can never fully recover it. Both on the job and at home there are many ways to be overexposed to sounds that can damage our hearing. It is important to realize how loud is too loud and how to protect yourself.

### Noise At Work

Many tools, equipment, and processes in the workplace generate high levels of noise that will hurt the hearing of the exposed workers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 22 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels at work each year. **Occupational hearing loss is one of the most common workplace injuries today in the United States.**

Damage to our hearing can happen over a short time, or over an extended period, depending on the source of the sound. Short loud bursts of noise such as explosions or gunshots can damage our ears in a short amount of time. Less hazardous noise such as woodworking equipment, heavy equipment, and machinery can lead to damage over an extended amount of time.

### Noise At Home

While many people are overexposed at work, many are overexposed at home. Many of your hobbies may also be causing hearing loss.

Activities such as listening to loud music, shooting guns, woodworking, using a lawnmower, riding a dirt bike, etc. will damage your hearing over time. It is important to understand what levels of noise will damage your hearing.

### If You Need to Shout...the Sound is Too Loud

Even without a device to measure sound, you can typically tell if the noise around you is too loud. If you or others need to shout to be heard or cannot understand each other even at arm's length away, the sound is too loud and may damage your hearing over time.

### 5 Ways to Protect Your Hearing

1. Turn the volume down.
2. Walk away from the loud noise.

3. Take breaks from the noise.
4. Avoid loud, noisy activities and places.
5. Use hearing protection.

## Recommendations to Help Prevent Hearing Loss from Loud Noise

### At Home

- Turn down the volume of the TV, radio, or music.
- If listening to loud music, take listening breaks to reduce your exposure.
- Use quieter products (power tools, toys, recreational vehicles) whenever they are available.
- Reduce equipment noise by replacing worn, loose, or unbalanced machine parts. Keep equipment well-lubricated and maintained.
- Use hearing protection devices (such as earplugs and earmuffs) when you cannot avoid loud sounds.
- Make hearing protection convenient. Stash earplugs in your car or workshop for easy access.
- Keep children away from loud music or equipment at home.

### At Public Events

- Move or stay far away from the loudest sound-producing source – such as loudspeakers or cannons at college stadiums – especially if attending with children.
- Limit the length of time of exposure to loud sounds.
- Pay attention to signs and information flyers warning of possible loud noise and the use of hearing protection.
- Bring hearing protection devices with you. Keep them in your car, pockets, or other easy-to-access places.

## Choose the Right Hearing Protection

The choice of hearing protection device depends on your personal preferences of comfort and where you will wear it. How well the protection works depends on whether you wear it consistently and correctly. The most common types of hearing protection devices include earplugs, earmuffs, and specially-made devices.

### Insert-Type Earplugs

These devices provide an air-tight seal in the ear canal. They are generally cheap, effective, and easy to use. They can be any of the following types:

- Pre-molded (pliable devices of fixed proportions)
- Formable (usually made of expandable foam)
- Custom-molded (to precisely fit the size and shape of an individual's ear canal)
- Canal caps (earplugs on a flexible plastic or metal band)

For information about insert-type earplugs, visit CDC's ["How to Wear Soft Foam Earplugs"](#) web page.

### Earmuffs



Earmuffs come in many models designed to fit most people. They block out noise by completely covering the outer ear. Some earmuffs also include electronic parts to help users communicate or to block sound impulses or background noise. However, earmuffs might not work as well for people with heavy beards, sideburns, or glasses.

Note: Wearing both earmuffs and earplugs together can reduce sound further. However, the noise reduction ratings for the two do not add together.

