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| Example Observation Report Deliverable |  |

## Introduction

The End Commercial Tobacco Campaign (ECTC) is a multiyear and statewide effort to disrupt the further influence of the tobacco industry, ban the sales of tobacco products, and eliminate tobacco-related disparities in California. As part of the ECTC objective, Da Vinci County Tobacco Control Program is pursing a smoke-free multi-unit housing (MUH) policy and a policy to prohibit smoking in outdoor public places both in Unincorporated Da Vinci County. The purpose of this report is to outline the methodology of the observation activity, report findings from the surveys, and provide recommendations to the project’s internal staff for next steps in their policy efforts.

## Methods

The California Tobacco Control Program (CTCP), in collaboration with other partner agencies, developed the standardized survey instruments for collecting observation data in MUH, parks, and sidewalks. A copy of the instruments are available at <https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/ectc>. As designed by CTCP, this is the first out of two waves of observation data collection. All these surveys were collected on the SurveyPocket app with a handheld mobile device.

The observation survey is part of a nonexperimental research study to monitor the presence of tobacco product litter, signage, and active smoking within multi-unit housing, sidewalks, and parks. CTCP provided comprehensive lists of MUHs, parks, and sidewalks as well as requirements for determining the minimum sample sizes of each.  A purposive sample of a minimum of 20 MUH was required, so 55 MUH observations were attempted.  A census of 10 parks and an equivalent number of 10 sidewalks at minimum was attempted.

Observations were conducted from the start of 2022 until the end of June 2022. Data collectors were trained through the asynchronous training materials available at <https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/ectc-trainings>. At the end of data collection, all responses from the mobile app were uploaded to the Tobacco Control Evaluation Center (TCEC) Survey Analytics account. TCEC verified that there were no duplicate responses and confirmed data quality was adequate. Then, TCEC processed the raw data responses in SPSS and sent them out along with other supporting documents like the guidelines and codebook. TCEC prepared and provided the finalized data sets to each Local Lead Agency’s ECTC Main Contact.

## Findings

The data collectors were able to complete observation surveys in 55 MUH, 8 out of the 10 parks, and 8 out of the 10 sidewalks.

### Multi-Unit Housing Observations

There are 3 census-designated places where observations were conducted at MUH properties: 33 MUH in Drew, 7 MUH in Valdora, and 15 MUH in and Richards. There was an average of 22.67 (99% CI: -20.34, 65.68) pieces of tobacco product waste per 100 square feet that were observed across the three census-designated places in Da Vinci County. Drew was among the three with the highest total count of tobacco product waste. Across Da Vinci County, there was tobacco litter found in 70.5% of the multi-unit buildings that were surveyed. The only areas within these multi-unit housing that contained any tobacco product waste were the parking lot, outdoor walkways, and outdoor stairways.

**County-wide average = 22.67**

Among these areas, the parking lot was ranked the highest in its average count of waste, which was 9.5 (99% CI: 6.81, 12.19) pieces of tobacco product waste per 100 square feet. Furthermore, MUHs with parking lots might be an area of focus to address the problem of tobacco litter.

There was no active smoking anywhere in the MUHs at the time of observation. Among the 55 MUHs, there were only 5 MUHs that had a no smoking or vaping sign on property grounds. This was expected as Da Vinci County does not yet have a legislated smoke free multi-unit housing policy.

### Park Observations

Across the 10 observed parks in Da Vinci County, there was an average of 11 (99% CI: -24.78, 46.78) pieces of tobacco product waste per 100 square feet. Valdora had the highest total count of tobacco product waste in their parks. Compared to Drew and Richards, Valdora also had the most tobacco product waste on average, which was 8 (99% CI: 5.53, 10.47) pieces of tobacco product waste per 100 square feet. Because three of the five parks in Valdora have a baseball diamond, that could have explained why there might have been more litter in those parks. The parks in Valdora are also known to be heavily used for other recreational purposes.

The park amenities where tobacco waste was observed were the restroom, picnic area, the baseball diamond area, and parking lot. Among the parks that were surveyed in the county, the restroom and picnic area had the highest total counts of tobacco litter compared to the other park amenities that were observed. These could be potential areas to address the problem of tobacco litter within the parks. There were five instances of smoking in three of the four parks in Drew. Although Da Vinci County does not have a smoke and tobacco-free park policy yet, there was only one park in Richards that had three no smoking/vaping signs, one of each in the play area/playground, restroom facility, and parking lot. Consequently, this might have explained why Richards also had the lowest observed count of litter in their parks.

### Sidewalk Observations

Across the 10 sidewalks surveyed, there was an average of 12.3 (99% CI: 8.81, 15.79) pieces of tobacco product waste per 100 square feet that were observed. There was at least one piece of tobacco litter found in 90% of the 10 sidewalks. The top sidewalk usage that contributed to the highest total count of tobacco litter were commercial/retail, restaurant with outdoor dining, park, and office/institutional, in that order.

There was at least one piece of tobacco litter found in 90% of sidewalks

Efforts to curb tobacco waste may need to be focused on sidewalks adjacent to these usages. Lastly, there was three instances of observed active smoking in two of the 10 sidewalks that were surveyed. Those two sidewalks had several usages adjacent to it, which coincidentally included commercial/retail, restaurant with outdoor dining, and office/institutional. Meanwhile, the overall building setback from the sidewalk was more than 15 feet.

## Limitations

There were several limitations. There were non-responses but not a significant number that would undermine the validity of the study. Data collection took place during the span of just a few days in early June, so the results could not be generalized to a wide range of seasons or time periods. Da Vinci County is known for it’s tourist attractions, so the timing of the data collection may have impacted the observations.

Another limitation is that because Da Vinci County is small in geographic size and does not offer a lot of amenities to observe, there are lower sample sizes and as a result a larger margin of error in the statistics (i.e., average, confidence intervals) and potential bias when comparing findings. For example, while most MUHs had an outdoor walkway, not every building had a parking lot. With fewer parking lots means fewer observations there, so there may be a skew in that finding compared to that of the outdoor walkways. Despite these limitations, the observations were still sufficient to draw some insights from the field.

## Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Post data collection, there are lessons learned and considerations for next steps. For smokefree MUH efforts, it may be important to focus education and signage on tobacco use in parking lots since it was the most common area where tobacco litter was observed. In parks, the restroom and picnic areas had the highest total counts of tobacco, so education and signage could focus on these amenities or areas.

The next wave of data collection will start in 2024. This will allow staff to make comparisons over time to see if any changes have been made over the two-year period.  It helps to get a better understanding and interpretation from the data described in this report to conduct another wave and potentially generate statewide results for comparison.

As far as the logistics of data collection, the data collector mentioned that they were often in areas with limited internet service, which caused them to lose some data.  Fortunately, they were able to return to redo the observation. Next time, it is recommended to return to an area with a more stable internet connection and then synchronizing responses to the server. This would prevent any potential data loss as they had experienced. It is also important to be prepared with a printed route for if the GPS signal gets disconnected.  It would also help to use a mapping tool to estimate the park’s location. Due to recent wildfires, some parks were not accessible either due to the route or park itself being damaged. Similarly, if a retail observation is included in the future, another suggestion from the data collector is to call the store before driving long distances to see if a store sells tobacco or is open at the time a data collector plans to go. These tips can help save time and gas if a location is closed or inaccessible.

Because tobacco litter was found in 70.5% of MUHs (n=55), this may indicate a problem of secondhand smoke on the building properties. It is likely that secondhand smoke may drift inside the buildings and create a health risk for vulnerable individuals. Efforts should be directed to include policy provisions for prohibiting tobacco use on all areas of the property grounds, including parking lots especially as most litter was found there. As Da Vinci County pursues a comprehensive outdoor smoke-free policy in the future, the results from the observations could also be used to provide evidence of litter or secondhand smoke in parks and sidewalks.

Results from this activity will be shared with project staff and coalition members to update them on the program’s progress. These results will mainly be used internally as we focus on engagement efforts while we await the second wave of data collection in 2024.

[Note: while not required, it may be helpful to include the instrument(s) in the appendices]