



Secondhand Smoke/ Smoke-Free Laws Key Message Points

SMOKE-FREE LAWS PROTECT ALL WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC FROM THE SERIOUS HEALTH HAZARDS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE

- Everyone has the right to breathe clean, smoke-free air, free from the proven dangers of secondhand smoke. No one should have to risk their health in order to earn a paycheck or enjoy a night out in a restaurant or bar.
- Strong smoke-free laws that include all workplaces, including restaurants and bars, are the only effective way to protect ALL workers and the public from the serious health hazards of secondhand smoke.
- Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, including at least 60 known to cause cancer. Chemicals in secondhand smoke include formaldehyde, cyanide, arsenic, carbon monoxide, methane, benzene, and radioactive polonium 210.
- There is no longer any scientific doubt that secondhand smoke poses a serious threat to human health. As the U.S. Surgeon General concluded when issuing a groundbreaking report in June 2006, "The debate is over. The science is clear: Secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance, but a serious health hazard that causes premature death and disease in children and nonsmoking adults."
- According to the Surgeon General, secondhand smoke is proven to cause lung cancer, heart disease, serious respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis and asthma, low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome. It is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths in the United States each year.
- The Surgeon General also found that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that the only way to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke is to require smoke-free workplaces and public places. Other approaches, such as air ventilation systems and smoking and non-smoking sections, do not eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.
- There is growing, bipartisan momentum across the country and the world to protect everyone's right to breathe clean, smoke-free air. Thirty (30) states, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have laws in effect that require smoke-free workplaces AND/OR restaurants AND/OR bars. In addition, Nebraska has passed a law that will go into effect in June, 2009.
- The American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and every major health group all

agree that secondhand smoke is dangerous and everyone should be protected from it in indoor workplaces and public places.

- Although 76 percent of white-collar workers are covered by smoke-free policies, just 52 percent of blue-collar workers and only 43 percent of food service workers benefit from these protections. In other words, the less you earn, the more likely you are to be exposed to secondhand smoke on the job!

SMOKE-FREE LAWS PROTECT HEALTH WITHOUT HARMING BUSINESS

- The evidence is growing all the time that smoke-free laws protect health without harming business. As the U.S. Surgeon General concluded in his 2006 report, "Evidence from peer-reviewed studies shows that smoke-free policies and regulations do not have an adverse impact on the hospitality industry."
- Dozens of studies and hard economic data have shown that smoke-free laws do not harm sales or employment in restaurants and bars, and in some cases these laws have a positive impact.
- Objective evidence, such as comparing restaurant and bar receipts before and after the passage of smoke-free laws demonstrate that smoke-free workplace laws have no impact, or even a positive impact, on business.
- A year after New York City's smoke-free law took effect in March 2003, a report found that business receipts for restaurants and bars increased, employment rose, the number of liquor licenses increased, virtually all establishments were complying with the law, and the vast majority of New Yorkers supported the law.
- There is also evidence that smoke-free air can be good for health and good for business. New York has seen growth in restaurant and "nightlife" business since the smoking ban took effect. Zagat's annual survey of New York City restaurant goers found that: "the city's recent smoking ban, far from curbing restaurant traffic, has given it a major lift." Across the nation, Zagat survey have consistently found that restaurant goers are more likely to dine out when restaurants are smoke-free.
- There is also evidence that smoke-free laws can save money. An August 2005 study by the Society of Actuaries found that secondhand smoke costs the U.S. \$10 billion a year in health care bills, lost wages and other costs.