

campaign for a **smoke-free** alberta

Questions & Answers:

100 per cent Smoke-free Workplace and Public Places Legislation

Why shouldn't municipalities set their own smoking bylaws?

Providing protection from second-hand cigarette smoke is a public health issue. Municipalities do not set their own water quality standards — uniform provincial standards are in place to provide all Albertans with safe water. Similarly, municipalities should not be solely responsible for setting their own air quality standards. Also, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) supports the Government of Alberta passing smoke-free legislation.⁹

Why should patios be smoke-free?

Smoke-free patios maintain a level playing field for health and for business. The concentration of smoking on patios that permit smoking is itself a health hazard, as there is no known safe level of exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke. In addition, smoke from outdoor patios will often enter the inside part of the establishment through passageways.

From a business perspective, permitting smoking at establishments that have the physical space to accommodate a patio may create an uneven playing field for those who do not have patios. Also, the many definitions of what is construed to be a patio are extremely problematic for enforcement.

Aren't smoke-free policies anti-smoker?

No. People who are smokers are very welcome in smoke-free environments; they simply have to step outside when they want to smoke.

Isn't smoking an individual choice?

Smoking is an addiction that generally begins in adolescence. Unfortunately, youthful experimentation with smoking often becomes a lifelong addiction. Most smokers want to quit but have a difficult time because they are addicted, and because of the many "triggers" for relapse they are exposed to, such as seeing someone else smoking.

Don't smokers have the right to smoke?

Providing smoke-free air does not take away anyone's right to smoke. Smoke-free policies do not remove the right to smoke any more than drunk driving laws or alcohol sales regulations remove the right to drink.

Isn't tobacco a legal product?

The health risks of tobacco use were not known when tobacco was first used. If introduced today, tobacco would not be legal. Alcohol is also a legal product and alcohol use is subject to laws to protect people from harm - such as impaired driving laws.

Prohibition didn't work for alcohol, why should it work for tobacco?

We are not trying to prohibit tobacco, but instead to regulate where it can be used.

Why doesn't the government just make smoking illegal?

Unfortunately, about one in five adults are smokers and most smokers are physically addicted to nicotine. To eliminate the legal supply of cigarettes when so many people are addicted to smoking would likely result in an illegal market. Similarly, alcohol prohibition didn't work because simply removing the legal supply did not eliminate the demand for liquor.

References

⁹ At the 2006 AUMA Convention, resolution C.iii.2, to prohibit smoking in public places, was introduced and passed by Alberta municipalities.



As a coalition of Alberta's leading health organizations, the Campaign for a Smoke-free Alberta advocates for a healthier Alberta that is free from tobacco addiction and involuntary exposure to tobacco industry products.

More information is available at www.smokefreealberta.com

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Briefing Paper



100 per cent Smoke-Free Workplaces & Public Places Legislation

Second-hand cigarette smoke is a Group A cancer causing substance. All workers deserve to be protected from workplace exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke, not only white-collar professionals. The following brief outlines the need for 100 per cent smoke-free workplace legislation.

THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE TO SECOND-HAND CIGARETTE SMOKE

Second-hand cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemical compounds, 50 of which are known to cause cancer, and many of which have no known safe level of exposure.¹ Some of the chemicals found in second-hand smoke are already prohibited from 'uncontrolled release' in Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act.²

ALBERTANS SUPPORT SMOKE-FREE AIR REGULATIONS

A January 2007 Ipsos-Reid survey of Albertans found that 80 per cent of respondents support provincial legislation to make all workplaces completely smoke-free, including restaurants, bars and gaming establishments. Public support is consistent in rural and urban areas.

SECOND-HAND CIGARETTE SMOKE KILLS OVER 1,000 CANADIANS EACH YEAR³

Second-hand smoke causes the same debilitating and sometimes fatal diseases in non-smokers as smokers, including heart disease and cancer.

SOME ALBERTANS ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO THE EFFECTS OF CIGARETTE SMOKE

Twenty per cent of Canadians have health conditions that are made worse by exposure to second-hand smoke, including asthma, allergies and heart disease.⁴

SECOND-HAND SMOKE TAKES A TOLL ON ALBERTANS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Restaurant and bar workers have much more prolonged exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke than patrons. Studies show that hospitality workers are at greater risk for respiratory problems and heart conditions because of second-hand smoke exposure.⁵

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LEVELS OF SECOND-HAND SMOKE IN RESTAURANTS AND BARS ARE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH

Levels of second-hand smoke in restaurants are about 160 to 200 per cent higher than in smoking offices, and 150 per cent higher than in a home with at least one smoker. Second-hand smoke levels in bars are 390 to 610 per cent higher than in offices that permit smoking, and 450 per cent higher than in homes with a smoker.⁵

VENTILATION MAY DILUTE SMOKE, BUT IT DOES NOT ELIMINATE RISK

There is no ventilation system that can remove carcinogens from second-hand cigarette smoke. While ventilation may reduce the odour of second-hand smoke, it does not remove the risk.

DESIGNATED SMOKING ROOMS ARE NOT GOOD FOR HEALTH OR SMALL BUSINESSES

Designated smoking rooms (DSRs) do not adequately protect non-smokers from second-hand cigarette smoke, especially those who are forced to work within them, including cleaning staff. DSRs create an uneven playing field among businesses since some establishments simply cannot afford to install one or there may not be enough physical space for a smoking room.

THE ONLY BUSINESS SMOKE-FREE AIR REGULATIONS HURT IS THE TOBACCO BUSINESS

All scientifically sound studies demonstrate there is no evidence of any long-term negative impact on hospitality establishments.⁶ Because smoke-free laws reduce smoking, these laws also reduce tobacco industry profits. Internal tobacco industry documents reveal the tobacco industry's strategy to protect its own profits by opposing smoke-free air laws⁷, in part, by financing questionable studies claiming that smoking bans hurt the hospitality industry.

SMOKE-FREE AIR HELPS SMOKERS QUIT

Smoke-free environments help smokers quit successfully by removing many of the triggers for relapse, such as seeing other people smoke. In a recent study⁸ of what factors led smokers to quit, smoke-free bylaws were cited as a prime motivator by 36 per cent and smokers who tried to quit were three times more successful in municipalities with smoke-free bylaws.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE LEGISLATION REDUCES DISPARITIES IN WORKPLACE STANDARDS

No Albertans have second-class lungs. All employees deserve to be protected from exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke, not only white-collar workers and those protected by effective municipal bylaws.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE STANDARDS SHOULD NOT BE SET BY THE MARKETPLACE

The provincial government does not allow the marketplace to determine other workplace health and safety standards, and second-hand smoke should be no exception.

PROGRESS IN OTHER PROVINCES

Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Manitoba and New Brunswick became smoke-free in 2004; Saskatchewan in 2005; and Nova Scotia, PEI, Ontario and Quebec in 2006. BC will be 100 per cent smoke-free by 2008. Only Alberta and Yukon do not protect employees from workplace exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION IS REQUIRED

Only a 100 per cent smoke-free workplace and public places legislation without designated smoking rooms and patios will provide uniform health protection and a level playing field for business.

References

- ¹ National Institute of Health. Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders: The Report of the US Environmental Protection Agency. US Department of Health and Human Services, 1993.
- ² The chemicals 4-aminodiphenyl and Beta-Naphthylamine, both present in secondhand smoke, are identified in the Chemical Hazards Regulation (CHR) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act as having no safe level of exposure. The "uncontrolled release."
- ³ Makomaski Illing EM and Kaiserman MJ. Mortality attributable to tobacco use in Canada and its regions. Canadian Journal of Public Health 2004 Jan-Feb;95(1):38-44.
- ⁴ Collishaw NE, Kirkbride J, Wigle DT. Tobacco smoke in the workplace: an occupational health hazard. Canadian Medical Association Journal 1984; 131: 1199-1204.
- ⁵ Siegel, M. Involuntary smoking in the restaurant workplace. A review of employee exposure and health effects. JAMA. 1993 Jul 28;270(4):490-3.
- ⁶ Luk, R., & Ferrence, R. *The Economic Impact of Smoke-Free Legislation on the Hospitality Industry*. Toronto: ON: Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, Special Report Series, February 2005.
- ⁷ Philip Morris USA Untitled Document Bates Number: 2021183916/39391993 in which PM outlines its "objective to prevent states, cities as well as businesses from passing smoking bans."
- ⁸ Bradford Mackay, Butting out in Canada: five down, eight to go Canadian Journal of Public Health 2004;95(3): 201-4.