



**Tobacco
Fact File**

Smoke-free public places

A prescription for public health

Tobacco FactFile: Smoke-free Public Places

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For more information and original references, visit the TCRC website, or consult Tobacco FactFile.

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Smoke-free public places: a prescription for health

- Second-hand smoke causes illness, including fatal illnesses
- Ventilation offers little protection against the health risks of second-hand smoke
- Smoke-free areas offer partial or no protection
- 8 out of 10 people - including most smokers - support legislation for smoke-free workplaces
- Legislation is more effective than voluntary measures
- **The time has come to make all enclosed public places – including workplaces – smoke-free, by law**

WHAT is second-hand smoke? Tobacco smoke is a lethal cocktail of more than 4000 chemicals, more than 50 of which are known to cause cancer. Second-hand smoke contains the same toxins.

WHY is it a problem? Second-hand smoke causes illness, including fatal illnesses. It can cause lung cancer and heart disease, and trigger asthma attacks. The BMA estimates that each year, passive smoking kills at least 1000 people.

HOW can we protect people? No safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke has been identified. Ventilation is not a solution. Non-smoking areas offer only partial protection. Only smoke-free places protect health.

WHEN? Current UK policies have failed. Smoke-free public places enjoy widespread public support. Government must act now to make all enclosed public places – including workplaces – smoke-free by law.

SMOKE-FREE: THE INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

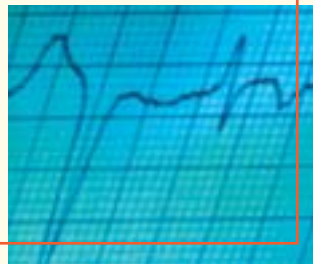
'I am confident that this measure will provide a health legacy, not just for current but for future generations'

Micheál Martin, Minister for Health and Children, on Ireland's Smoke-Free at Work law

- **In Finland, exposure to second-hand smoke plummeted after voluntary measures were replaced with legislation.**
- New York's law on smoking in public places is well respected: **97% of bars and restaurants are now smoke-free.**
- In 2004, Ireland and Norway became smoke-free by law. New Zealand and Sweden will soon follow.
- **Second-hand smoke causes asthma, respiratory illnesses and ear infections in children**
- The more cigarettes smoked in a household, the greater the risk of cot death



8 out of 10 people know that second-hand smoke can cause lung cancer



HEALTH

'scientific evidence has unequivocally established that exposure to tobacco smoke causes death, disease and disability'
WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

- **Second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer by 20 - 30%.**
 - Passive smoking increases the risk of heart disease by 25-35%.
 - 8 out of 10 asthmatics say second-hand smoke can trigger an attack
 - Pregnant non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to have low birth weight babies and to give birth prematurely **Passive smoking almost doubles the risk of stroke**
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- **The tobacco industry has encouraged opposition to smoke-free bars, restaurants and clubs worldwide.**
 - Lung cancer rates declined **6** times faster in California than in US States without smoke-free laws. **96% of pubs in Ireland comply with the new law.**
 - After legislation for smoke-free public places was introduced in Australia, children's exposure to second-hand smoke in the home fell **Fewer than 1% of British pubs are smoke-free.**
 - The tobacco industry promotes ineffective, voluntary measures on smoking in public places

'The only way to rapidly and successfully tackle the health risks from second-hand smoke is to introduce a ban on smoking in public places.'
Prof Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer, England

● **Smoke-free policies protect health.**
When bars became smoke-free in San Francisco, bartenders respiratory health improved dramatically.

● Smoke-free places help the 7 out of 10 smokers who want to quit, making it easier for them to stop and to stay stopped.

Just 30 minutes in a smoky room can reduce the flow of blood to the heart

● **Non-smokers who work in the smokiest bars are around 20 times more likely to get lung cancer than the average non-smoker**

● Certain people are especially vulnerable to second-hand smoke: 8 million with lung disease, 2.1 million with angina, 1.3 million who have had a heart attack, and 300,000 who have had a stroke.

● **In smoke-filled rooms, pollution levels can reach 50 times those in a busy road tunnel**

Smoke-free workplaces would cost the tobacco industry £310 million each year in lost sales.



EXPOSURE

'An hour a day in a room with a smoker is nearly 100 times more likely to cause lung cancer in a non-smoker than 20 years spent in a building containing asbestos.' **Prof Sir Richard Doll, Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford**

- **Just half of all workers work in a smoke-free environment.**
- More than three million people are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at work.
- Bar workers' exposure to second-hand smoke is six times that of office workers.

Tobacco smoke is the main source of indoor air pollution

- **Smoke-free places may reduce the risk of young people taking up smoking.**
- Smoke-free laws have been associated with significant reductions in heart disease.
- **Smoke-free workplaces could cut smoking rates by 4 percentage points and tobacco consumption by 7%.**
- When fewer adults smoke, children's exposure to second-hand smoke is reduced

The Royal Medical Colleges estimate that smoke-free public places could save 160,000 lives



CURRENT POLICY

'The UK is rapidly falling behind in its provisions to protect non-smokers' Prof Sir David Carter, Chair, BMA Board of Science

- The UK has no law to protect people from the health risks of second-hand smoke

- Many toxins in second-hand smoke are invisible, odourless gases, which are not removed by ventilation and air-filtering systems



- Filtered tobacco smoke can have the same potential to cause cancer as unfiltered smoke.

- Workers in non-smoking areas can have the same exposure to second-hand smoke as those in smoking areas.

- Non-smoking areas offer partial to no protection against second-hand smoke.

- In 15 years of voluntary initiatives on smoking in public places, not one has met its targets

64% of pubs complying with the voluntary code allow smoking throughout.

Current UK government policies rely on voluntary measures, non-smoking areas, air cleaning and ventilation