



State Smokefree Air Laws

Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard, causing or worsening a wide range of adverse health effects, including lung cancer, respiratory infections, and asthma. A number of states have moved to protect their citizens from this threat by passing laws that prohibit smoking in almost all public places and workplaces, including restaurants and bars. As of July 1, 2011, 27 states and the District of Columbia have such laws in effect. See the map below to see which states these are.

Action/Key Facts on Smokefree Air Laws:

- In 2011, no states have approved comprehensive smokefree laws, although several states, including Mississippi and Texas, considered them. Nevada weakened its previous law allowing smoking again in all bars and some restaurants.
- In November 2010, South Dakota voters approved a law passed by the legislature in 2009 prohibiting smoking in all restaurants, bars and casinos/gaming establishments. The law took effect November 10, 2010.
- The American Lung Association issued its *Smokefree Air Challenge* in 2006 calling on all states to pass comprehensive smokefree laws as soon as possible. For more information go to: www.lungusa.org/smokefree.

Smokefree Air Laws Protect Public Health:

- The 2010 Surgeon General's report on smoking, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease* confirmed that there is no risk-free level of exposure to tobacco smoke, and that inhaling the complex mixture of more than 7,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke causes adverse health outcomes, particularly cancer and cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases.¹
- Exposure to secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,400 lung cancer deaths and 46,000 heart disease deaths among nonsmokers every year.²
- In October 2009, the prestigious Institute of Medicine issued a new report, *Secondhand Smoke Exposure and Cardiovascular Effects: Making Sense of the Evidence*, that confirmed that secondhand smoke is a cause of heart attacks. The report also concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and that even relatively brief exposure could cause a heart attack.³
- The National Cancer Institute found that being employed in a workplace where smoking is prohibited is associated with a reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked per day and an increase in the success rate of smokers who are attempting to quit.⁴

⁴ National Cancer Institute. *Population Based Smoking Cessation: Proceedings of a Conference on What Works to Influence Cessation in the General Population, Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph 12*. NIH Pub. 00-4892, Nov. 2000.