



1400 EYE STREET, N.W. • SUITE 1200 • WASHINGTON, DC 20005
PHONE (202) 296-5469 • FAX (202) 296-5427

Smoke-Free Laws Protect Everyone's Right to Breathe Clean Air!

✓ **Secondhand Smoke Causes Disease, Death, and Disability**

- **Everyone has the right to breathe clean air.** The [Surgeon General's 2006 Report](#) on The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke confirmed that secondhand smoke causes cancer, heart disease and serious lung ailments. As former Surgeon General Richard Carmona stated when releasing the report, "The debate is over. The science is clear. Secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance but a serious health hazard."
- Secondhand smoke contains over [4,000 chemicals, including at least 69 that cause cancer](#), including arsenic, ammonia, formaldehyde, and polonium 210.
- According to the [Centers For Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), nearly 50,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease attributable to secondhand smoke exposure.
- Studies show that children, the elderly, and people with respiratory illnesses are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke. For example, children exposed to secondhand smoke are more susceptible to bronchitis, asthma, eye and ear problems, and other ailments.

✓ **Reducing Secondhand Smoke Exposure Reduces Death and Disease**

- According to the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, studies conducted in several communities, states, and countries have found that implementing smoke-free laws is associated with reductions in hospital heart attack admissions. The CDC notes that, "smoke-free laws likely reduce heart attack hospitalizations both by reducing secondhand smoke exposure among nonsmokers and by reducing smoking, with the first factor making the larger contribution." ([MMWR, January 2009](#))
- A study in the [British Medical Journal](#) found that lifelong nonsmokers living with smokers had, on average, a 24 percent higher chance of contracting lung cancer than those living with nonsmokers, and that those exposed to the heaviest smokers for the longest time had the highest risks.
- Before California bars went smoke free in 1998, 74 percent of San Francisco bartenders reported experiencing respiratory difficulties. Within two months of bars going smoke free, complaints of these symptoms [dropped by almost 60 percent](#).
- Similarly, before New York bars and restaurants went smoke free, [59 percent of hospitality workers reported experiencing respiratory symptoms](#). After the law took effect, the number of workers experiencing morning cough dropped by 46 percent.