

Smoke-Free Legislation and the Social Climate of Secondhand Smoke in Mississippi

Updated July 2008

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Secondhand Smoke is Harmful to Health

- It contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds, of which at least 43 are known carcinogens.
- Secondhand tobacco smoke is in the same category as the most toxic automotive and industrial air pollutants, according to the California EPA

According to the Surgeon General's most recent report, "The health effects of secondhand smoke exposure are more pervasive than we previously thought. The scientific evidence is now indisputable: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance. It is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and nonsmoking adults... We know that secondhand smoke harms people's health, but many people assume that exposure to secondhand smoke in small doses does not do any significant damage to one's health. However, science has proven that there is NO risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. **Let me say that again: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.** ~ *Surgeon General Carmona, June 27, 2006*

What are Other Places Doing?

Comprehensive Smoke-free Laws

As of July 2008, **twenty-seven states** have enacted comprehensive smoke-free laws for restaurants and twenty states have enacted comprehensive smoke-free laws for bars.

Tennessee, Georgia, and Arkansas have also passed state-wide laws, but their smoke-free laws do not apply to restaurants that do not serve or employ minors are exempt in these three states. In addition to the states with comprehensive smoke-free laws, **297 communities have a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance** that prohibits smoking in workplaces, restaurants, and bars.

Currently, **nearly two-thirds (65.1%) of the U.S. population** lives in a state or a community that has a comprehensive smoke-free law, and most of the southeastern states have enacted statewide smoke-free laws. Yet, **only 8.65% of Mississippians** are protected by law from secondhand smoke. Mississippi has not passed any state-wide legislation that would apply to indoor work areas, restaurants, or bars.

Strong Public Support for Smoke-Free Legislation

The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control, administered by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University, demonstrated that:

- **70 percent of Mississippi adults believe that restaurants should be completely smoke-free**, while
- **72 percent believe that indoor work areas should be completely smoke-free.**

Results from the Social Climate Survey also revealed that smoke-free public places are an issue with substantial bipartisan support among Mississippi adults. The majority of Republicans and Democrats stated that these public places should be smoke-free.

Smoke-free Communities in Mississippi

In Mississippi, 19 communities have enacted strong smoke-free ordinances. The following communities have enacted comprehensive smoke-free laws for all indoor public places, including restaurants and bars.

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|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Aberdeen | 8. Hattiesburg | 15. Petal |
| 2. Amory | 9. Hernando | 16. Pontotoc |
| 3. Corinth | 10. Kosciusko | 17. Ridgeland |
| 4. Ecu | 11. Mantachie | 18. Starkville |
| 5. Flora | 12. Metcalfe | 19. Tupelo |
| 6. Greenville | 13. Mayersville | |
| 7. Greenwood | 14. Oxford | |

Smoke-Free Laws Do Not Hurt Local Businesses

The best-designed economic impact studies demonstrate that smoke-free legislation has had no negative impact on sales tax revenue and employment in the hospitality industry – and has had a positive impact in some places (Scollo, Lal, Hyland, & Glantz, 2003). Moreover, the only studies that detected negative impacts did not include adjustments for economic conditions and/or relied on subjective measures rather than objective, economic indicators. The Starkville Smoke-free Ordinance was enacted on May 20, 2006. Local sales tax data demonstrate that the restaurant industry has continued to grow in the months that followed.

Ventilation Systems

The only means of effectively eliminating health risks associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity... No other engineering approaches, including current and advanced dilution ventilation or air cleaning technologies, have demonstrated or should be relied upon to control health risks from ETS exposure in spaces where smoking occurs. Because of ASHRAE's mission to act for the benefit of the public, it encourages elimination of smoking in the indoor environment as the optimal way to minimize ETS exposure. - *American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), June 2005*

This report was updated on 15 July to include data from the 2008 MS Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control and the 1 July release of policy data from the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation.

This report was produced by scientists at the Social Science Research Center of Mississippi State University. This project is funded by a grant of the Mississippi State Department of Health. Additional support was provided by the Bower Foundation. Any opinions implied or expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Bower Foundation, or of Mississippi State University.