

Outdoor Smoking Restrictions

Adapted by Smoke Free Nova Scotia from Canadian Cancer Society-Nova Scotia Division

Reasons to Support Outdoor Smoking Restrictions

- **Fewer children and youth start using tobacco.** Prohibiting smoking in outdoor locations where people congregate, such as parks, playgrounds, sport and recreational facilities, beaches, outdoor bus stops, outdoor concerts, markets, parade routes and public festivals, creates an environment where NOT smoking is the norm. Smoke-free environments have been shown to reduce the likelihood that children and youth will start to use tobacco.^{1, 2, 3, 4}
- **Outdoor smoking causes harm to people nearby.** The level of toxic second-hand tobacco smoke within a few feet of a person smoking outdoors can be as high as in homes and bars where smoking is permitted, and the amount of poison in the air increases according to the number of people smoking.^{5, 6}
- **There is no safe level of second-hand smoke.** Even in small concentrations, second-hand smoke causes immediate, short-term and long-term harm to people exposed to it. The long-term harm can include premature death from cancer or heart disease.⁷
- **Restricting outdoor smoking also could reduce litter and pollution from discarded cigarette butts.** In a 2004 survey, 58% of Minnesota park directors in cities with policies reported cleaner park areas.⁸ Discarded cigarettes pollute land and water. The poison butts may be eaten by toddlers, pets, birds or fish.

To prevent this harm, smoking should be prohibited in specified outdoor places where people gather including: parks, playgrounds, sport and recreational facilities, beaches, unenclosed bus stops, outdoor seating areas, outdoor concerts, markets, festival grounds and parade routes.

- **It is particularly important to prohibit smoking in outdoor locations where children congregate** because children are more susceptible to the health effects of second-hand smoke than adults.⁹ Also, adult smoking in view of children may send children the message that smoking is associated with enjoyable outdoor activities.
- **Experience shows that smoking bans in outdoor locations are enforceable.** Many North American jurisdictions have successfully implemented them. Dozens of US jurisdictions have banned smoking in outdoor places like parks, playgrounds, beaches and sport and recreational facilities. Municipalities across Canada are increasingly adopting similar measures.¹⁰
- **The overwhelming majority of Nova Scotians want protection from second-hand smoke outdoors.** According to a Canadian Cancer Society poll (November 2007), 80% of Nova Scotians would support a law to make public areas such as park and playgrounds smoke-free, 79% would support a law to make sports fields smoke-free and 73% would support a law to make beaches smoke-free.

¹ Wakefield MA, Chaloupka FJ, Kaufman NJ, Orleans CT, Barker DC, Ruel EE. Do Restrictions on Smoking at Home, at School and in Public Places Influence Teenage Smoking?, Impact Teen Research Paper Series, No.3, Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 2000.

² Dunn, D. A., Schultz, A. S., Nowatzki, J. and Griffith, J. (2007). *Understanding Youth Decisions to Remain Smoke-free: The influence of household socialization*. Oral Presentation, National Conference on Tobacco or Health. Edmonton. October 2, 2007. (Kwantlen University College, Surrey B.C)

³ Chaloupka FJ, Wechsler H. Tobacco Control Policies and Smoking Among Young Adults. *Journal of Health Economics*. 1997; 16: 359-373.

⁴ Farkas, AJ, Gilpin EA, White M and John P. Pierce. Association Between Household and Workplace Smoking Restrictions and Adolescent Smoking *JAMA*. 2000;284:717-722.

⁵ Klepeis NE, Ott W, Switzer P. Real-time measurement of outdoor tobacco smoke. *Journal of the Air and Waste Management Association* 2007 May; 57(5):522-34. Accessed online on January 14, 2008, from: <http://secure.awma.org/journal/pdfs/2007/5/10.3155-1047-3289.57.5.522.pdf>.

⁶ Repace J. Measurements of outdoor air pollution from secondhand smoke on the UMBC campus. 2005, published online at: <http://www.repace.com/pdf/outdoorair.pdf>

⁷ 2006 US Surgeon General's Report - the Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. Accessed January 25, 2007 from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2006/index.htm#highlights

⁸ Klein EG, Forster JL, McFadden B, Outley CW. Minnesota tobacco-free policies: attitudes of the general public and park officials. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* 2007 Jan;9 Suppl 1:S49-55. Abstract available online at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&uid=17365726&cmd=showdetailview&indexed=google>

⁹ Health Canada. (2005). Make Your Home and Car Smoke-free: A Guide to Protecting your Family from Second-hand Smoke. Accessed December 5, 2007 from http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index_e.html

¹⁰ In Minnesota 104 municipal units have policies for tobacco free parks. In California, at least ten cities, including Malibu, Los Angeles and Santa Monica California have smoke-free beaches. The city of Calabasas has a policy covering smoking in all outdoor spaces. Canadian examples include Collingwood and New Tecumseh, Ontario, banning smoking in or near playgrounds; St. Albert, Alberta, "on the grounds of an outdoor public event"; Ottawa, at or near municipal bus stops; Moncton, and Stratford PEI, municipal sports fields.

Background Information

Health effects of outdoor second-hand smoke

- There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Even in very small concentrations, second-hand smoke causes acute, near-term and long-term harm to those exposed to it.¹¹

Immediate harm:

- Triggers asthma attacks;
- Causes nausea, dizziness, coughing, headaches, sore throat, sore eyes and nasal irritation.

Short-term harm:

- Exposure increases likelihood of contracting cold, flu, bronchitis and pneumonia.

Long-term harm:

- Greater likelihood of premature death from cancer or heart disease.
- Contributes to development of breathing problems.

- Even by the most conservative estimate, second-hand smoke kills approximately 26 Nova Scotians per year¹², and many more get sick from second-hand smoke. Other estimates range as high as 200 deaths per year in Nova Scotia from second-hand smoke.
- Smoking kills over 1,700 Nova Scotians per year.¹³ This is 21% of all deaths in the province, making smoking the number one preventable cause of death in Nova Scotia.

Pollution and litter from outdoor smoking

- Small children are at risk from swallowing or choking on discarded butts. In the US, about 8000 cases of toxic exposures are due to ingesting cigarette butts each year.¹⁴
- Fish, birds and other animals often swallow discarded cigarette butts. This can result in malnutrition, starvation and death for these creatures.¹⁵

Enforceability

- Many jurisdictions throughout North America have successfully implemented complete or partial outdoor smoking bans. This shows that they are enforceable.¹⁶
- Opponents of smoking restrictions have always warned that they will be unenforceable and these warnings have always been proven wrong. Three decades ago, in January 1978, the Executive Director of the Halifax Infirmary declared that a smoking ban in his hospital would be unenforceable.¹⁷ The same was said two years ago by opponents of the province-wide smoking ban in bars and restaurants.
- A 2006 study in Minnesota found that 91% of park and recreation directors in municipalities without smoke-free recreation policies expressed a high level of concern over enforcement issues, but only 26% of their counterparts in municipalities with smoke-free recreation policies reported any enforcement problems.¹⁸

¹¹ 2006 US Surgeon General's Report - the Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. Accessed January 25, 2007 from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2006/index.htm#highlights

¹² Colman R, Rhymes J. *The Cost of Tobacco Use in Nova Scotia*. 2007 Aug, GPI Atlantic, pages 40-41. Accessed online on January 24, 2008 from: <http://www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/health/tobacco/costoftobacco-ns-2007.pdf>.

¹³ *Ibid*, pages 36-39.

¹⁴ Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Accessed online on January 14, 2008, from: <http://www.lapublichealth.org/tob/about.htm>.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Minnesota leads the way with 104 municipal units having policies establishing tobacco free parks. In California, at least ten cities, including Malibu, Los Angeles and Santa Monica California have smoke-free beaches. The city of Calabasas has a policy covering smoking in all outdoor spaces.

¹⁷ *The Nova Scotian*, 2008 Jan 13, page 7.

¹⁸ Klein EG, Forster JL, McFadden B, Outley CW. Minnesota tobacco-free policies: attitudes of the general public and park officials. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* 2007 Jan;9 Suppl 1:S49-55. Abstract available online at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&uid=17365726&cmd=showdetailview&indexed=google>