SMOKE-FREE LAWS WORK

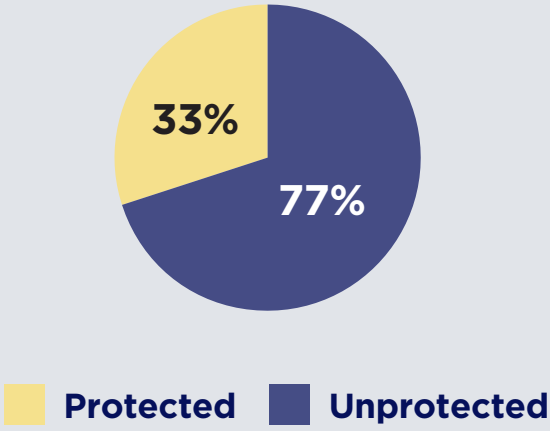
Comprehensive smokefree laws have been adopted at the national, state/provincial, and local levels around the world to protect everyone's right to breath clean air in all workplaces and public places.

As of the end of 2024, 33% of people around the world live in countries or local jurisdictions that have adopted comprehensive smokefree laws. Since Ireland became the first smokefree country in 2004, 79 countries have adopted smokefree laws covering all workplaces and public places. These laws have been a resounding success everywhere they have been adopted and implemented — improving health and the economy by protecting everyone from cancer, heart disease, and other deadly effects of secondhand smoke.

Countries Must Act; Billions Are Still Unprotected From Secondhand Smoke.

With two-thirds of the world's citizens still left unprotected, secondhand smoke continues to take a huge toll on health — killing 1.6 million people globally each year.[1] Every country should act to protect their citizens from secondhand smoke. The evidence is clear, not only that secondhand smoke kills, but that smoke-free laws work to reduce exposure, saving lives and health care dollars.

Global Population Protected by Smoke-free Laws



Countries Can Act With Confidence That Smokefree Laws Will Be Successful And Popular.

Around the world, in a wide variety of cultures and political systems, smokefree laws have been implemented with high compliance and thus have resulted in immediate improvement in air quality, worker and public health, business success, and public support.

As outlined next, the evidence is clear that, when implemented effectively, national smokefree laws are a resounding success on every dimension. Cities and other sub-nationals have also experienced this success and can play a key role in protecting their citizens and building momentum for national smokefree laws.

1 Compliance by establishments and smokers is high

With proper communication and support, businesses and other establishments comply with the smokefree law. With education and encouragement, they not only respect the law, but many embrace and celebrate it, which leads to the most positive outcomes. This is evidenced by the increasing number of countries and localities that adopt these lifesaving laws.

- The first country to pass a comprehensive national smokefree law, Ireland, saw compliance levels as high as 95% a year after implementation.[2]
- One year after passing a comprehensive smokefree law in New York State, 97% of bars and restaurants complied.[3]
- In the city of Xining, China, two years after significant smokefree legislation revisions and enhancements in 2021, compliance ranged from 65.2% to 100% by venue type.[4]

2 The air that workers and patrons breathe improves almost immediately

High compliance with smokefree laws results in an almost immediate improvement in air quality, with the attendant decease in exposure to the toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke. Pre/post air quality studies show a rapid improvement in air quality after cities or other entities implement their smokefree laws.

Surveillance surveys also show reduced self-reports of secondhand smoke exposure in the wake of the passage of these laws. These are just a few examples of what always happens when laws are passed and implemented effectively.

- A study conducted before and after the Delaware (U.S.) Clean Indoor Air law went into effect found a 95% drop in air carcinogen levels and a 90% drop in fine particle air pollution levels in the hospitality venues tested.[5]
- An air quality study conducted in Puerto Rico documented an 82.2% reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ levels and a 50.9% reduction in cotinine levels in casinos following a complete workplace smoking ban in 2007.[6]
- Median air nicotine concentrations in public places in Montevideo, Uruguay, significantly decreased after the implementation of comprehensive smokefree legislation in March 2006.[7]

3 Worker and public health improves in the near and longer term

With immediately reduced exposure to the toxins in secondhand smoke, it is no surprise that workers experience improvement in health, some of it very quickly. Research has also documented declines in cardiovascular events in the general public in the wake of smokefree laws.

- A study conducted in Scotland after implementing their national smokefree law found rapid (within 2 months) improvements in several health outcomes in non-smoking bar workers, including: reductions in respiratory symptoms, improvements in lung function, reductions in inflammation or swelling of airways, and improved quality of life among bar employees with asthma.[8]
- A Cochrane review of 12 studies found evidence of a significant reduction in hospital admissions for cardiac events following implementation of smokefree laws.[9]
- A meta-analysis of 45 studies of 33 smokefree laws found that such laws were associated with lower rates of hospital admissions or deaths for: coronary events, other heart disease, cerebrovascular accidents, and respiratory disease.[10]
- A recent meta-analysis conducted in 2024 found that smokefree laws were significantly associated with reductions in the rates of hospital admissions for stroke.[11]

4 Businesses prosper as customers are happy and costs are reduced

While some businesses, especially in the hospitality sector, may fear the change that comes with smokefree laws, the evidence is clear that smokefree laws do not harm the hospitality sector and likely improve business, as non-smokers outnumber smokers, and smokers respect the rights of non-smokers to breathe clean air. Hospitality and other businesses also reduce maintenance costs, health care costs, and employee absenteeism.

- In 2016, the U.S. National Cancer Institute and the World Health Organization conducted an extensive review of the economic literature on tobacco control and concluded that all of the best-designed studies establish that smokefree laws "do not cause adverse economic outcomes for business, including restaurants and bars. In fact, smokefree policies often have a positive economic impact on business."[12]
- A 2014 meta-analysis of 39 studies conducted around the world examined the economic impacts of smokefree laws on bars and restaurants, finding there were no substantial changes to employment or sales for the hospitality industry overall following implementation and that restaurants experienced small economic gains.[13]

5 Smokers are encouraged to quit and are more likely to succeed; Fewer kids start smoking

Most smokers want to quit, and smokefree laws give them more reason and motivation to do so. With their workplaces and public places smokefree, there is also less encouragement to smoke and fewer opportunities for relapse, enhancing success rates among those who try to quit. This has the salutary impact of reducing secondhand smoke in homes, as smoke-free laws also encourage even smokers who do not quit to smoke outdoors. These effects are even greater if encouragement to quit and support in doing so is promoted by employers, health professionals, and others when smokefree laws are implemented.

The smokefree norms generated by smokefree laws and other tobacco policies (e.g., marketing restrictions) also create an environment where young people are less likely to see smoking as normal and acceptable and thus to experiment and become addicted. Since most smokers start as kids, this means fewer smokers in the future.

Two U.S. Surgeon General reports find sufficient evidence to support smoke-free policies' impact on cessation and youth initiation:

- The 2020 U.S Surgeon General's report, *Smoking Cessation*, found evidence "to infer that smoke-free policies reduce smoking prevalence, reduce cigarette consumption, and increase smoking cessation.[14]
- The 2014 Surgeon General's Report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*, found that, smoke-free policies contribute to diminished social acceptability and social advantage for smoking.[15]

6 Public support is high and grows after implementation

Most people dislike being exposed to secondhand smoke. As the public is educated about the harms of secondhand smoke, they become more comfortable expressing their right to breathe clean air and support for smokefree laws. These laws thus receive strong public support, which grows even stronger when people experience the benefits of smokefree workplaces and public places.

No one wants to go back, and smokefree laws are seldom, if ever, weakened and virtually never repealed.

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