

HEALTH

According to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, “Secondhand smoke is a significant health hazard for foodservice workers. To protect these workers, smoking in bars and restaurants should be prohibited.”⁽¹⁾ One category of workers should not be forced to face health risks from which other workers are protected.

The Environmental Protection Agency has classified secondhand smoke as a Group A Carcinogen – a substance known to cause cancer in humans. There is no safe level of exposure for Group A toxins.⁽²⁾

Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control, American Lung Association, American Cancer Society and American Heart Association, all agree that secondhand smoke kills. Approximately 53,000 nonsmoking Americans die annually from a combination of lung and heart disease.

Employers informed on these risks will be better able to protect their employees and avoid liabilities they might otherwise incur from secondhand smoke exposure.

1. M. Siegel, M.D., M.P.H., “Involuntary Smoking in the Restaurant Workplace,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, July 1993: 270:4
2. EPA, *Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking*, December 1992

The evidence of the dangers of secondhand smoke is well known. The following is a list of facts concerning secondhand smoke exposure. You can use this information for your own knowledge, or use it to inform your employees or customers about the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Highest Exposure Rates:

Working a shift in a smoky bar is equivalent to actively smoking nearly a pack of cigarettes per day.⁽³⁾

Bar employees' exposure to secondhand smoke is **four to six times higher** than other food or beverage service workers.⁽⁴⁾

The risk of **lung cancer increased almost three fold for people who worked with smokers** compared with those who worked in a smoke-free environment (*according to a study published in the International Journal of Cancer in 2002.*)

Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing 53,000 nonsmokers each year. For every eight smokers the tobacco industry kills, they take one nonsmoker with them.⁽⁵⁾



“The government has limited responsibility, and that limited responsibility falls within the area of health and safety.”

Ted Burke

Shadow-Brook Restaurant

3. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Michael Siegel, MD, MPH, July 28, 1993, Vol. 270, No. 4

4. M. Siegel, MD, MPH, *Smoke-free Restaurant Guide for Policymakers*, 1992

5. Glantz, S.A. & Parmley, W. *AHA Circulation*, 1991:83:1-12; and Taylor, A., Johnson, D. & Kazemi, H. *AHA Circulation*, 1992: 699- 702



Dangerous Chemicals:

Workplaces are taking the initiative to protect workers from secondhand smoke exposure: **the prevalence of smoke-free workplace policies has increased from 46% in 1993 to 69% in 1999.** ⁽⁶⁾ And it has continued to rise since then.

In 2002/2003 the percentage of restaurant and bar workers protected by smoke-free workplace laws doubled.

Secondhand smoke contains over 4000 chemicals including **formaldehyde, cyanide, arsenic, carbon monoxide, methane and benzene.**⁽⁷⁾ Among the chemicals identified in cigarette smoke, 69 are considered poisons.⁽⁸⁾ **These include 43 chemicals that are known carcinogens.**

In Delaware, which went smoke-free in 2002, **indoor air quality testing at eight hospitality venues showed a 95 percent drop in carcinogen levels after the indoor smoking ban went into effect,** according to a scientific study funded by the American Medical Association.

To date, **no ventilation system has been shown to remove the cancer causing chemicals found in secondhand smoke.** No ventilation equipment manufacturer or even any cigarette manufacturer will make that claim.

6. Shopland, D.R., K.K. Gerlach, D.M. Burns, A.M. Hartman, and J.T. Gibson. 2001. "State-Specific Trends in Smoke-Free Workplace Policy Coverage: The Current Population Survey Tobacco Use Supplement, 1993 to 1999". *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 43: 680-686
7. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 1992. *Respiratory Health Effects of Passive Smoking: Lung Cancer and Other Disorders*. EPA/600/6-90/006F. Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air and Radiation
8. Hoffmann, D., I. Hoffmann, and K. El-Payoumy. 2001. "The Less Harmful Cigarette: A Controversial Issue. A Tribute to Ernst L. Wynder". *Chemical Research in Toxicology* 14(7): 767-790

Heart Disease and Cancer:

Even half an hour of secondhand smoke exposure causes heart damage similar to that of habitual smokers:

Nonsmokers' heart **arteries showed a reduced ability to dilate**, diminishing the ability of the heart to get life-giving blood.⁽⁹⁾

In addition, the same half hour of secondhand smoke activates blood platelets, which can initiate the process of atherosclerosis (**blockage of the heart's arteries**) that leads to a heart attack.⁽⁹⁾

These effects explain other research showing that nonsmokers regularly exposed to secondhand smoke suffer death or **morbidity rates 30 percent higher** than that of unexposed nonsmokers.⁽⁹⁾

In the largest study ever conducted on the issue, Harvard Medical School found that high exposure to secondhand smoke nearly **doubles a woman's risk of having a heart attack**.⁽¹⁰⁾

Waitresses die from higher rates of lung and heart disease than any other female occupational group, according to a study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association. **They have four times the expected lung cancer mortality and 2 ½ times the expected heart disease mortality rate**.⁽¹¹⁾

After adjusting for the effects of active smoking, alcohol intake, and socioeconomic status, before the state went smoke-free, California waitresses and male bartenders had death rates from lung cancer, heart disease and **overall mortality that were 1 ½ times higher than those for all other female workers**.⁽¹²⁾

9. Otsuka, R., et al. "Acute Effects of Passive Smoking on the Coronary Circulation in Healthy Young Adults," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286: 436-441, 2001. Burghuber, O., et al. "Platelet sensitivity to prostacyclin in smokers and non-smokers," *Chest*, 90: 34-38, 1986)

10. Harvard Medical School, Kawachi I., et al., May 1997

11. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Michael Siegel, MD, MPH, July 28, 1993, Vol. 270, No. 4

12. M. Siegel, MD, MPH., "Smoking and Bars: A Guide for Policy Makers", 1998