THE FACTS

We all have to make a living. Breathing secondhand smoke shouldn't be a condition of employment.

Did You Know Not All California Workplaces Are Smoke-Free?

- When California's Smoke-Free Workplace law (Labor Code Section 6404.5) became effective in 1995, it was a landmark piece of legislation. No other state had a similar law for eight years. However, we can no longer claim that California is a national leader in protecting workers from secondhand smoke exposure on the job because:
  - California is not considered a 100% smoke-free state by the nation's leading public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Twenty-four other states and the District of Columbia are considered to have 100% smoke-free indoor workplaces – leaving California far behind.[1]
  - Exemptions and loopholes in California law mean that employees and patrons of certain businesses continue to be exposed to the toxic effects of secondhand smoke, even indoors. In fact, 1 in 7 California workers (13.5%) report being exposed to secondhand smoke in the workplace.[2]

- **The only way to protect people** from breathing secondhand smoke inside is to require all workplaces and public places to be smoke-free. Other approaches, such as smoking rooms or air ventilation systems, do not eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke. [3,4]

Shouldn't ALL California Workers Breathe Smoke-Free Air?

- **Yes**. More than 90% of Californians approve of a law to protect workers from secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace.[5]

- Yet certain groups of Californians continue to have a higher risk of exposure to secondhand smoke. Unequal worker protection places young adults, Hispanics and low-income workers at higher risk of harm from secondhand smoke. Workers reporting the highest exposure to secondhand smoke include:
  - Low-income workers:
    - 22.7% of those with a $10,001 to $20,000 annual household income; and
    - 16.6% of those with a $20,001 to $30,000 annual household income.
  - 25.5% of young adults (ages 18-24).
  - 19.2% of Hispanics.

- Because of gaps in California's Smoke-Free Workplace law, workers in the hospitality, service, and blue-collar employment sectors are most likely to be unprotected.

How Dangerous is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand smoke contains at least 250 chemicals known to be toxic and/or cause cancer, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic, ammonia, and hydrogen cyanide.[7]

"Reducing health disparities is both a public health priority and a community responsibility. All California workers deserve equal protection from secondhand smoke to prevent the serious health risks such exposure is known to cause. Exposure to secondhand smoke should not be a condition of employment."

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies secondhand smoke as a Class "A" human carcinogen (cancer-causing agent), the same class as asbestos.[8] The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has concluded that secondhand smoke in the workplace is an occupational carcinogen.[9]

- The California Air Resources Board has declared secondhand smoke to be a toxic air contaminant, in the same category as diesel exhaust.[10]

- The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, ventilation cannot eliminate exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke, and establishing smoke-free environments is the only proven way to prevent exposure.[11]

California's Winnable Battle
Finish the Fight Against Tobacco

California Department of Public Health
California Tobacco Control Program
P.O. Box 997377, MS7206
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377
www. www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco

California Department of PublicHealth

- Secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death in nonsmokers, including:
  - Lung cancer
  - Heart disease
  - Respiratory diseases

- Nonsmokers who are frequently exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25-30%, and lung cancer by 20-30%.[12]

What are the Costs and Benefits of Being Smoke-Free?

- Nationally, the annual direct medical care costs associated with secondhand smoke exposure is estimated to be $5 billion and another $5 billion for indirect costs.[13]

- Smoke-free laws have been found to reduce the rate of heart attacks in communities by an average of 17% after one year and 26% after three years.[14]

- Smoke-free laws also promote smoking cessation; they increase quit attempts by smokers and decrease cigarette consumption.[15]

- Research shows that smoke-free policies and regulations do not have a negative impact on business revenues.[16] Establishing smoke-free workplaces is the simplest and most cost effective way to improve employee and employer health.[17]

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