

Smoke-Free Laws are Good for Workers!

✓ All Employees Have the Right to Breathe Clean, Smoke-Free Air While They Work

- A 2010 Report by the Surgeon General found that tobacco smoke contains a deadly mixture of [more than 7,000 chemicals](#) and compounds, of which hundreds are toxic and at least 69 cause cancer.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace is associated with an [increased risk of lung cancer](#).
- Smoke-free policies are the only effective way to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke exposure [decreases substantially](#) among nonsmoking employees of restaurants and bars (and among nonsmoking adults in the general public) after implementing smoke-free laws.
- Hospitality workers are [immediately protected](#) when smoke-free laws take effect. Studies of hospitality workers before and after smoke-free laws show significant reductions in self-reported exposure to secondhand smoke, along with declines in respiratory symptoms.
- Just one month after Minnesota's Freedom to Breathe law went into effect, [exposure to a carcinogen from tobacco](#) in a group of nonsmoking hospitality workers fell by 85 percent, and nicotine exposure fell by 83 percent.
- A 2007 [American Journal for Public Health](#) study surveyed non-smoking bar and restaurant employees in both smoking and smoke-free establishments in Oregon. Workers in establishments that allowed smoking absorbed a potent tobacco-specific carcinogen when exposed to secondhand smoke. The study also found that levels of this carcinogen increase by an average of 6 percent after every hour of work.
- A 2006 study conducted in Scotland shows smoke-free legislation improved pulmonary function in employees just one month after implementation ([JAMA](#)). A more recent study demonstrates improved respiratory health in barmen one year after Ireland's smoke-free law went into effect ([American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine](#), 2007).
- Before New York bars and restaurants went smoke free, 88 percent of hospitality workers reported experiencing sensory symptoms (red or irritated eyes, sore or scratchy throat, runny nose, sneezing or nose irritation). One year after the law took effect, complaints of sensory symptoms among the sample of workers dropped by 57 percent. ([Tobacco Control](#), 2005).