



# Second Hand Smoke - THE FACTS



## What is second hand smoke?

Second hand smoke refers to the smoke that is effectively shared with those who choose not to smoke. It is made up of two different types:


- 1 **“Sidestream Smoke”**: This comes from the tip of a cigarette or a cigar.
- 2 **“Mainstream Smoke”**: This is the smoke exhaled by the smoker.

Sidestream smoke is the most dangerous type of second hand smoke but unfortunately it accounts for approximately 85% of smoke in a room.




## What second hand smoke can cause?

- Irritation of the eyes - soreness/redness and watering
- Irritation of throat - soreness and dryness
- Coughing - can be chesty or dry
- Breathing difficulties/shortness of breath
- Sneezing and nasal irritation - the inhalation of second hand smoke proves particularly bad for those who suffer from hay fever
- Headaches and nausea



Those who are exposed to second hand smoke on a regular basis (for example if they work in a smoky atmosphere everyday) it has been shown to cause:

- Asthma
- Chest infections - inhalation of second hand smoke is accountable for increased cases of chest infections if you work in a smoky atmosphere.
- Lung cancer
- Nasal sinus cancer
- Heart disease
- Growth problems to unborn children
- Coronary heart problems



It only takes 30 minutes exposure to second hand smoke to have a significant effect on the body. The Californian Environmental Protection Agency in the United States have compared second hand smoke to the likes of other class A carcinogens such as arsenic and asbestos (Californian EPA, 1997).

“An estimated 12,000 UK nonsmokers die annually from second hand smoke (SHS) exposure at home, at work and in social venues.” (Repace, 2003).



# Smoking - A FEW FACTS

- Smoking kills 120,000 people each year in the UK (Chief Medical Officers Annual Report, 2002).

- Those who do not smoke are put at risk from the inhalation of second hand smoke (passive smoking). Inhaling second hand smoke can increase the risk of:

- Lung Cancer by 16 - 19%
- Heart Disease by 25 - 35%
- A stroke - *this risk is almost doubled*

(BMA Report, Nov 2002).

- **73% of the adult population do not smoke**

(Chief Medical Officers Annual Report, 2002).

- 7 out of 10 smokers would like to stop smoking and they believe that smoke free environments would aid them to do so (Smoking Related Behaviour and Attitudes, 2002).

- Tobacco smoke contains 4000 chemicals - 50 are known to be carcinogenic

(Chief Medical Officers Annual Report, 2002).

Opinion surveys are showing more and more people, including smokers, want to see a growing number of premises become smoke free:

- 87% of people want restrictions on smoking in public places
- 86% of people want restrictions on smoking in restaurants
- 53% of people want restrictions on smoking in pubs

(Office of National Statistics, July 2003).

- Ventilation systems only filter out the particles - not the gases. The most dangerous gases feature in the highest levels within side stream smoke (smoke from the tip of the cigarette). The best level of protection to those who do not smoke is by being completely smoke free (BMA Report, Nov 2002).

- Treating smoking related diseases costs the NHS £1.7 billion a year (Department of Health, 2001).



# Why Go Smoke Free?

*By becoming smoke free your organisation will receive a number of benefits:*

## **The risk of fire will be reduced**

Smoking material that has not been properly extinguished accounts for a large number of fires in all organisations that allow smoking. Smoke Free organisations reduce that risk considerably.

## **Cleaning costs are lowered**

Smoke causes a lot of damage to furniture and surroundings. Staining from the smoke can take a lot of effort and a lot of money to remove. Those organisations that have gone smoke free have found that their cleaning costs reduce by about 50%.

## **You help employees to stop smoking**

You will be able to provide your staff with help and support if they choose to stop smoking. Smoke Free Cheshire will give you a lot of guidance and provide you with health promotion material and contact numbers. 7 out of 10 smokers would like to quit and a smoke free environment would give them a greater chance of success.

## **Employees have less absence from work**





Those who do not smoke are less likely to be absent from work due to illness. A smoker has more of a risk from illnesses such as colds, flu and infections and therefore has been shown to have more time off. By aiding staff to stop smoking and showing them support, you will effectively be making a large difference to the figures of absence.

## **Improves the corporate image**

Removing smoking from your premises will almost certainly improve the image of your organisation. Smoke free premises show that an employer is considerate of the health and welfare of his/her non smoking staff.

## **Improve health of employees/visitors**


As an employer, it is important that you should be thinking of the health and welfare of your staff (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) and ensuring that the environment they work in is as safe and comfortable as is possible. Smoke free environments will obviously improve the health of those within them. They also encourage more people to stop smoking. Smoke free premises also reduce the risk of compensation claims in the future. Nowadays, employees are aware of their rights and this includes their right to seek compensation if their health is damaged at work, and this includes damage through the inhalation of second hand smoke.





# What Does The Scheme Involve?

When you enrol on the Smoke Free Cheshire scheme you are making the commitment to clean the air within your premises and provide a more welcoming and healthier environment for staff and visitors.




*As you progress with the scheme, you will receive support as and when you require it. Different aspects to the scheme are discussed below:*

## Meeting and discussion


You may wish to have a number of meetings with Smoke Free Cheshire organisers and with members of your team. At this stage you can issue staff with information about the scheme and perhaps have a secret ballot to find out their opinions on your organisation becoming smoke free.

## Designing a new policy



You may be required to alter your smoking policy so that it shows you are a smoke free organisation. Within this pack there are instructions on how to design a policy and an example of a policy. Policies are important as they let employees and visitors know where the organisation stands on certain issues. The premises will be smoke free but how you choose to operate in terms of lunches and breaks is your choice. Smoke Free Cheshire organisers will help you design and implement the policy if you should need it.

## Press release




You may wish to do a press release so we will help you construct one if you require assistance. Press releases are useful in the way that they inform others of what will be happening and give advertisement for your organisation. Ideally, a press release should be released at least 6-8 weeks before the changes are made.

## Access to health improvement material

You will be provided with access to health improvement material. This can be distributed amongst employees who wish to stop smoking. Within the information provided there will be useful phone numbers and addresses where individuals can obtain more support if they choose to do so.

## Publicity materials



As you are announced smoke free you will receive Smoke Free Cheshire publicity materials to display on your premises. These will include a poster(s) and a sticky label(s) to attach to your door (this shows all visitors that you are a smoke free organisation). You will also receive a certificate that you can mount and display.

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# How to Design and Implement a 'Smoke Free' Policy

*A working policy is very important as it allows your employees to know where your organisation stands in terms of rules and regulations concerned with smoking activity. Obviously, your premises will be completely free from tobacco smoke but there may be other points you wish to add to your Smoke Free Policy. You might want to use some of these guidelines when you design the policy:*

## **1 Have a meeting with your employees and let them know what will be happening.**

To find out their opinions you could devise a comments box where everyone can enter their comments in secrecy - this ensures that you gain more honest opinions and no one feels awkward about expressing their view.

## **2 Set up a policy group.**

These individuals could be elected to discuss aspects relating to the policy and should agree on a timescale of operation. They can gather input from others and discuss various problems that may arise with creating a smoke free policy.

## **3 Produce a draft of the policy.**

This is so it can be circulated and approved by others. It can then be re-drafted and re-circulated until all the problems are ironed out.

## **4 Monitor the policy.**

It should be followed closely to ensure that it runs smoothly and there are no problems when it is introduced.

## **5 Having the correct signage to support your policy.**

When you become smoke free you will be presented with sticker(s) and poster(s) welcoming people to smoke free premises. You may also wish to use the red and white "No Smoking" signs in conjunction with our material, as this will raise awareness that you are smoke free.

You may want to mention the policy on the contract of employment. This is so your employees are aware that they are working in premises that are clear of tobacco smoke. This will be laid down clearly in text with the consequences of breaches in policy.

When designing your policy you have to decide how far you want to be smoke free. To comply with the scheme the premises will be smoke free, but you could also extend the policy to include company vehicles, the outside of the building (in doorways) and on the car park if you so wish to do so. Whether you take this step is entirely your choice, as long as your premises are smoke free you can receive the acknowledgment.

You will have to take in to consideration how many members of your team actually smoke and give them support and encouragement if they decide to stop. It is important that you do not make the smoker feel persecuted. People who choose to smoke are entitled to make that choice if they want to. The policy is concerned with protecting others from second hand smoke.

# Example of a Smoke Free Policy

## Smoke Free Policy for

(Company Name)

## Effective From

(Date)

## Authorised by

(Managers Signature)

### Introduction

It has long been reported that second hand smoke causes damage to health. In light of this evidence, we are going to support and implement a smoke free policy for our organisation so that all our customers and staff will not be at risk from the inhalation of tobacco smoke.

### Purpose

- To improve health
- To improve awareness of the risks associated with second hand smoke
- To protect staff and customers from second hand smoke
- To provide support and encouragement to those who wish to stop smoking

### Principle of the Policy

A smoke free environment will help to reduce the risk of disease contracted through the inhalation of second hand smoke. This policy will protect staff and customers and aims to promote a healthier environment for all. We also make a commitment to give assistance to those who need it when they decide to stop smoking.

This policy will apply to all members of staff and all visitors into the organisation.

### Statement

We are a smoke free organisation, and from \_\_\_\_\_ the entire building is smoke free. The smoking of any tobacco products will therefore not be permitted on the premises and any breaches in policy will face disciplinary action.

### Assistance for those who smoke

We recognise the importance of being smoke free and therefore adhere to the principle that second hand smoke is damaging to health. In addition, we also stand by the notion that smoking is an addictive behaviour. We pledge that we are willing to be very supportive to anyone who wishes to give up smoking by offering stop smoking information to anyone who is interested.

### All Employees - New and Old

All employees will be issued with a copy of the policy so that they are made aware of every component.

### Monitoring

The policy will be monitored by management to ensure that it is running effectively. Any problems or queries relating to the policy can be put to management through a staff representative.

### Alterations

If there are any changes made to the policy, all employees will be informed of this and given sufficient notice of 3 months, before the changes are put in to place.

# What Do I Do Now?

## ■ Contact:

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## References:

British Medical Association (Nov 2002) *"Towards Smoke Free Public Places"* BMA: London.

California Environmental Protection Agency (1997) *"Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke - Final Report"*. Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment: USA.

Chief Medical Officers Annual report (2002) *"Getting Serious About Second Hand Smoke"* in Department of Health's *"Health Check - On the State of Public Health"*.

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Repace, J. L. (2003) *"A Killer on the Loose"*, ASH.