

# Report finds risk in all secondhand smoke

► Only smoke-free buildings protect nonsmokers, according to the surgeon general.

By LAURAN NEERGAARD  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Separate smoking sections don't cut it: Only smoke-free buildings and public places truly protect nonsmokers from the hazards of breathing in other people's tobacco smoke, says a long-awaited surgeon general's report.

Some 126 million nonsmokers are exposed to secondhand smoke, what U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona repeatedly calls "involuntary smoking" that puts people at increased risk of death from lung cancer, heart disease and other illnesses.

Moreover, there is no risk-free level of exposure to someone else's drifting smoke, declares the report issued Tuesday — a conclusion sure to fuel already growing efforts at public smoking bans nationwide. Fourteen states have passed what are considered comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws, those that include restaurants and bars.

But the surgeon general is especially concerned about young children who can't escape their parents' addiction in search of cleaner air: Just over one in five children is exposed to secondhand smoke at home, where workplace bans don't reach. Those children are at increased risk of SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome; lung infections such as pneumonia; ear infections; and more severe asthma.



Vice Adm. Richard Carmona, U.S. surgeon general, gestures Tuesday during a Washington news conference on secondhand cigarette smoke.

NICK WASS / Associated Press

"The debate is over. The science is clear. Secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance but a serious health hazard," Carmona said.

He implored parents especially to smoke outside if they can't quit, or while they're trying to quit, so that they don't endanger their children whose bodies are especially vulnerable to smoke's toxic substances.

For everyone else, "stay away from smokers," Carmona said.

The report won't surprise doctors. It isn't a new study but a compilation of the best research on secondhand smoke, the most comprehensive federal probe since the last surgeon general's report on the topic in 1986, which declared secondhand smoke a cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

Since then, other health agencies have linked secondhand smoke to heart disease and other illnesses. Earlier this year, California health officials estimated that secondhand smoke kills about 3,400 nonsmoking Americans annually from lung cancer, 46,000 from heart disease, and 430 from SIDS.

The new surgeon general's report doesn't retally the deaths, but it cites that toll.

The tobacco industry and some businesses, particularly restaurant and bar owners concerned about loss of customers, have challenged some of the broadest public smoking bans in cities and states.

The new report gives new scientific ammunition against those challenges, said Matthew Myers of the Campaign for Tobacco-

Free Kids.

"There is no longer a scientific controversy that secondhand smoke is a killer," he said. The report "eliminates any excuse from any state or city for taking halfway measures to restrict smoking, or permitting smoking in any indoor workplace."

Among other findings:

► Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air and ventilation systems don't eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.

► There is good evidence that comprehensive smoking bans, like those in New York City and Boston, don't economically hurt the hospitality industry.

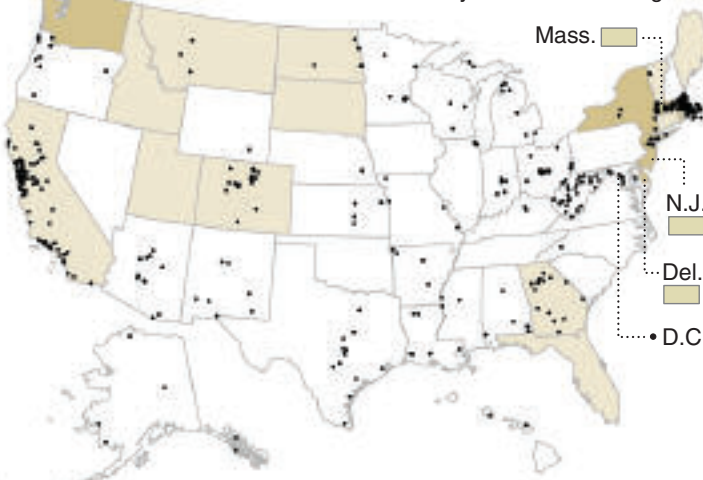
► Workplace smoking restrictions not only reduce secondhand smoke but discourage ac-

## Smoking slowly being rubbed out

New Jersey is the newest state to join a growing number of others to place a ban on smoking. As of July 1, 2006, 17 states will have no-smoking laws in effect, along with 461 towns, cities and counties.

### State no-smoking laws

- Banned in all workplaces, restaurants and bars
- Banned in either workplaces, restaurants or bars
- Locality with a no-smoking law



NOTE: Some states allow for separate smoking areas in workplaces

SOURCE: Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

AP

tive smoking by employees.

► Secondhand smoke can act on the arteries so quickly that even a brief pass through someone else's smoke can endanger people at high risk of heart disease. Don't ever smoke around a sick relative, Carmona advised

► Living with a smoker increases a nonsmoker's risk of lung cancer and heart disease by up to 30 percent.

► There isn't proof that secondhand smoke causes breast cancer, although the evidence is suggestive. California earlier this

year cited that link in becoming the first state to declare secondhand smoke a toxic air pollutant.

► On the plus side, blood measurements of a nicotine byproduct show that exposure to secondhand smoke has decreased. Levels dropped by 75 percent in adults and 68 percent in children between the early 1990s and 2002. However, not only has children's exposure declined less rapidly, but levels of that byproduct among children are more than twice as high as in nonsmoking adults.

## State support for broader ban surveyed

By APRIL MARCISZEWSKI  
World Staff Writer

The Oklahoma Alliance on Health or Tobacco is advocating a smoking ban in bars and elsewhere on the heels of a surgeon general's report on secondhand smoke and an Oklahoma State University survey on residents' attitudes toward smoking.

"No Oklahoma worker should ever have to make a choice between putting their health at risk and earning a living," said Wes Glinnsman, alliance chairman.

The alliance is working with Oklahoma businesses to ban smoking and cities to adopt laws that mirror the state smoking ban so the municipalities can enforce the ban, Glinnsman said.

The OSU survey found 84 percent of Oklahomans, and 57 percent of state smokers, support the law prohibiting smoking in most public places and work places, including restaurants.

Ten percent of Oklahomans oppose the law, according to the survey, which was conducted for the state Health Department by Josh Wiener, director of the Center for Social and Services Marketing at OSU.

Florida-based Talk2Rep surveyed 800 randomly selected Oklahomans 18 and older by phone in May and June, Wiener said. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus approximately 3.5 percentage points.

Ninety percent of Oklahomans think the rights of customers and workers to breathe clean air outweighs the right of smokers to smoke.

Also, 93 percent of Oklahomans and 70 percent of smokers in Oklahoma think workers should be protected from secondhand smoke in the workplace, according to the survey.

Other findings:

► Fifty percent of Oklahomans and 28 percent of Oklahoma smokers support banning smoking in bars.

► The ban on smoking within 25 feet of entrances to government buildings and within 15 feet of restaurant entrances is supported by 72 percent of Oklahomans and 52 percent of smokers.

► Sixty percent of Oklahomans and 48 percent of smokers favor banning smoking at race tracks. Such a ban is opposed by 22 percent of Oklahomans and 52 percent of smokers.

► A majority of Oklahomans, 77 percent, say the smoking ban has made going out in Oklahoma a more enjoyable experience, with 5 percent saying it is less enjoyable. Among smokers, 35 percent said going out is more enjoyable, 42 percent said there is no difference and 23 percent said going out is less enjoyable.

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	Lace Black Medium		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	KC White Medium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
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World staff writer Shannon Muchmore contributed to this story.