

Smoke-Free Workplaces and Public Places

Second-hand smoke is dangerous and exposure is common in China. Hazardous air levels of nicotine from cigarettes are found in many places, including nearly all restaurants, 70% of schools and hospitals, government buildings, and train stations.¹ Smoking bans are effective, inexpensive, popular and highly cost-effective.

Of non-smokers currently exposed to second-hand smoke in China, currently 450 million people:

- More than 100,000 people will die every year from exposure to second-hand smoke.²
- After just 30 minutes of exposure to second-hand smoke, their risk of heart disease increases.³
- They have a 25% higher risk of chronic respiratory disease, and a 40-60% higher risk of developing asthma.⁴⁻⁶
- Children have a 50-100% higher risk of respiratory illness.⁴⁻⁶
- Children exposed by second-hand smoke before the age of 20 appear to be 4.5 times more likely to develop lung cancer.⁷

Smoking bans improve air quality, reduce smoking and are popular with residents:

- Smoke-free laws have been shown to reduce airborne nicotine levels by more than 80% and particulate matter by 70-90%.⁸
- Smoke-free laws prevent children from starting to smoke:
 - In China, the percentage of 13-15 year olds who have tried smoking ranges from 16% in Shandong, and 21% in Guangdong and Tianjin, to 30% in Chongqing.⁹ Teens who work in smoke-free workplaces are much less likely to start smoking than their peers who work where smoking is allowed.¹²
- Smoking bans encourage families to make their homes smoke-free,¹⁰ which protects children and other family members from the dangers of second-hand smoke.
- Public approval of smoking bans is high. A 2006 China CDC survey found that more than 90% of people supported banning smoking in schools, hospitals and public transportation and more than 80% were in favor of workplace smoking bans.¹¹

Banning smoking in workplaces helps workers quit smoking, helps those who continue to smoke to smoke less, and produces overall workplace productivity increases:

- Smoke-free workplaces reduce smoking prevalence by almost 4%, and can decrease per capita consumption by 5-8%.¹²
- Those in smoke-free workplaces are more than twice as likely to quit smoking as those who work where smoking is permitted.¹³
- Smokers who keep smoking decrease their daily consumption by 3-4 cigarettes a day.^{12,13}
- Smokers miss 3 times more days of work than non-smokers.¹⁴

- Former smokers are 4.5% more productive than current smokers.¹⁴
- Non-smokers are more productive because they don't have to take smoking breaks.
- Workplace smoking bans protect non-smoking employees from disease and disability due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

Banning smoking from public places saves lives and doesn't hurt businesses:

- When bars and restaurants become smoke-free there is either no change in sales or employment, or there is a slight positive effect from such changes.¹⁵⁻¹⁷
- Even the tobacco industry has stated that smoking bans don't hurt businesses.¹⁸

References

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