



Smoke-Free Laws Save Lives Make NC Worksites & Public Places Smoke-Free

Every Employee Has the Right to a Smoke-Free Workplace

- ✓ No one should have to risk their life to keep a job. Every workplace – including restaurants, bars, government buildings, bowling alleys, and other public places – should be smoke-free. Smokers are free to continue to smoke—as long as they don't expose others involuntarily to cancer-causing chemicals. When one person's right to engage in certain behaviors conflicts with another person's right not to be harmed, limits have generally been placed on the harmful behavior.
- ✓ There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.¹ Every year secondhand smoke causes 35,000 deaths in the U.S.² In North Carolina, more than 1,000 adults, children and babies die each year from others' smoking.³
- ✓ As little as thirty minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger a heart attack in someone with heart disease or risk factors for heart disease.⁴ Most people work eight-hour shifts. Restaurant workers often work longer hours.
- ✓ Non-smokers routinely exposed to secondhand smoke have a 50% increase in risk of developing lung cancer.^{5 6 7}

Smoke-Free Policies Save Money and Don't Hurt Business

- ✓ In addition to saving lives, smoke-free policies save health care costs. A recent study in Pueblo, Colorado found the rate of heart attacks declined 41% after a smoke-free law went into effect. Not only did fewer people have heart attacks, but this had a rippling effect on public and private health care costs.⁸
- ✓ Tobacco use costs North Carolina taxpayers \$2.46 billion in direct healthcare costs (\$769 million in Medicaid expenses alone), and \$3.3 billion in lost productivity annually.⁹
- ✓ Smoke-free restaurants can expect to save about \$190 per 1,000 square feet each year in lower cleaning and maintenance costs.¹⁰ This adds up to savings of \$4 billion to \$8 billion per year nationwide.¹¹
- ✓ Studies show that smoke-free workplace laws have either a positive or neutral effect on business. In fact, no rigorous, scientifically conducted study has found negative economic impact from smoke-free policies.¹² Even in North Carolina, the number one tobacco producing state in the nation, smoke-free policies did not hurt business.¹³
- ✓ Employees who smoke have an average insured payment for health care of \$1,145, while nonsmoking employees average \$762.¹⁴ Smokers, on average, miss more work days and use more healthcare resources than employees who do not smoke.^{15 16 17}
- ✓ Most people who smoke want to quit, and smoke-free policies can help smokers successfully quit smoking.¹⁸

Most North Carolinians Support Smoke-Free Workplaces

- ✓ Nine out of 10 North Carolinians agree that employees should be able to work in a smoke-free environment.¹⁹
- ✓ Nearly 80% of North Carolinians are non-smokers.²⁰
- ✓ Nearly 100 organizations have signed a resolution to make all public places and worksites smoke-free.

***Protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke:
Make all worksites and public places smoke-free!***

Tobacco Use Is Killing North Carolina²¹

- ✓ 1.5 million North Carolina adults smoke, leading to nearly 12,000 preventable deaths a year caused by smoking, and more than 1,000 deaths among non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke. This costs North Carolina taxpayers \$2.46 billion in direct healthcare costs (\$769 million in Medicaid expenses alone), and \$3.3 billion in lost productivity annually.
- ✓ 11,800 North Carolina children will become regular smokers this year, buying more than 25 million packs of cigarettes. 194,000 children alive today will die prematurely because of smoking.

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