

SMOKEFREE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Scientific evidence has firmly established that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. Implementing 100% smoke-free environments is the only way to protect the population from its harmful effects.

As many examples around the world now demonstrate, smoke-free laws are the only acceptable public health and human rights approach to ensure full protection.

100% Smoke-free laws require that everyone is protected from the hazards of secondhand smoke, in all enclosed workplaces and public places, including all restaurants, bars and other hospitality venues. It means that there are no designated smoking rooms, no exempted premises, and no exempted people.

Smokefree laws should:

- Be binding;
- Establish enforcement mechanisms;
- Impose penalties for violations; and
- Cover all businesses¹

WHO/FCTC Smokefree Recommendations

Building upon the evidence from country experiences, the World Health Organization (WHO), with consultation from leading medical and scientific authorities, has developed key policy recommendations to protect workers and the public from exposure to second-hand smoke.²

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the international tobacco control treaty, requires all ratifying countries to adopt effective smokefree policies. More than 150 countries have ratified the FCTC, and are legally bound to adopt effective smokefree policies.³ The FCTC's governing body, the Conference of the Parties, has adopted guidelines for countries to follow in implementing smokefree policies that meet the treaty's requirements.⁴ The FCTC guidelines follow and in some areas expand on the WHO smokefree policy recommendations.

The WHO policy recommendations and the FCTC guidelines both include the following advice:

100% smokefree environments, not "designated smoking rooms"

- 100% smokefree environments are the only effective strategy to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Ventilation and smoking areas do not effectively protect people from exposure to secondhand smoke and are not recommended.

Universal protection by law

- Legislation protecting all workers is necessary to protect everyone's right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to life, and the right to a healthy environment.

- Laws requiring all indoor workplaces and public places to be 100% smoke-free ensure equal protection for all. Voluntary policies are not an acceptable alternative.
- Effective protection may require specific quasi-outdoor and outdoor workplaces to be smoke-free.

Public education to reduce SHS exposure

- Governments should educate opinion leaders, key stakeholders and the general public about the need for legislation, with a focus on the harms caused by secondhand smoke exposure.⁵
- When the public understands the health risks of tobacco smoke, smoke-free laws are popular, well-respected, and largely self-enforcing.⁶
- Key messages for public education campaigns should focus on the harm caused by second-hand smoke exposure; the fact that elimination of smoke indoors is the only science-based solution to ensure complete protection from exposure; the right of all workers to be equally protected by law; and the fact that smokefree laws do not harm business. Public education campaigns should also target settings for which legislation may not be feasible or appropriate, such as private homes.⁷
- An engaged public becomes the primary monitoring mechanism for a strong law, reducing the resources needed for enforcement and ensuring high levels of compliance.⁸

Proper implementation and adequate enforcement of the law

- Governments must be prepared to invest reasonable resources in achieving and enforcing smoke-free laws. These should include funds for
 - promotional campaigns to build support for the law;
 - public opinion polls;
 - educational materials on implementation;
 - compliance monitoring systems;
 - a public complaints hotline; and
 - an increase in the number of implementation inspectors
- Governments should be prepared to face lobbying campaigns and legal challenges from the tobacco industry and its front groups to amend or roll back the law.
- Governments should take actions before and after implementation of the law to ensure its sustainability, including comprehensive education campaigns; consultations with stakeholders; and providing data on the effectiveness of the legislation.

¹ World Health Organization (2007). Protection from Exposure to Second-hand Tobacco Smoke. Policy Recommendations. p. 14. Available online at: http://www.who.int/tobacco/resources/publications/wntd/2007/pol_recommendations/en/index.html. Accessed 11.08.07

² World Health Organization (2007). Protection from Exposure to Second-hand Tobacco Smoke. Policy Recommendations. p. 20. Available online at: http://www.who.int/tobacco/resources/publications/wntd/2007/pol_recommendations/en/index.html. Accessed 11.08.07

³ World Health Organization (5 October 2007). Updated Status of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Available at <http://www.who.int/tobacco/framework/countrylist/en/index.html>. Accessed on 11.09.2007

⁴ ‘Adoption of the guidelines for implementation of Article 8’. World Health Organization, Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, second session, decision FCTC/COP2(7). Available online at: http://www.who.int/gb/fctc/PDF/cop2/FCTC_COP2_DIV9-en.pdf. Accessed on 11.09.07

⁵ ‘Adoption of the guidelines for implementation of Article 8’. World Health Organization, Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, second session, decision FCTC/COP2(7). Available online at: http://www.who.int/gb/fctc/PDF/cop2/FCTC_COP2_DIV9-en.pdf. Accessed on 11.09.07

⁶ Global Smokefree Partnership and Framework Convention Alliance. Joint Briefing Paper: Proposed Guidelines for the Implementation of Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Second Session of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Bangkok, Thailand, 30 June – 6 July 2007. Available online at: <http://fctc.org/docs/documents/fca-2007-cop-article8-cop2-briefing-en.pdf>. Accessed on 11.10.2007.

⁷ ‘Adoption of the guidelines for implementation of Article 8’. World Health Organization, Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, second session, decision FCTC/COP2(7). Available online at: http://www.who.int/gb/fctc/PDF/cop2/FCTC_COP2_DIV9-en.pdf. Accessed on 11.09.07

⁸ Global Smokefree Partnership and Framework Convention Alliance. Joint Briefing Paper: Proposed Guidelines for the Implementation of Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Second Session of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Bangkok, Thailand, 30 June – 6 July 2007. Available online at: <http://fctc.org/docs/documents/fca-2007-cop-article8-cop2-briefing-en.pdf>. Accessed on 11.10.2007.