

Orange County Board of Health Smoke-Free Public Places Rule Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why did the Orange County Board of Health (BOH) initiate and approve a Smoke-Free Public Places Rule?

Health impacts

- Everyone has the right to breathe clean air in public places.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure are leading preventable causes of illness and premature death in North Carolina and the nation.
- There are solutions to the health and environmental impacts of smoking. After restaurants and bars became smoke-free in NC, average weekly emergency room visits by people experiencing heart attacks decreased by 21%.

Dangers of secondhand smoke

- Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, hundreds of which are toxic (such as formaldehyde, arsenic and lead) and about 70 can cause cancer.
- In 2006, a report issued by the United States Surgeon General stated that the scientific evidence indicates that **there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke** and that secondhand smoke has been proven to cause cancer, heart disease, and asthma attacks in both smokers and nonsmokers.
- The CDC advises that all individuals with coronary heart disease or known risk factors for coronary heart disease should avoid all indoor environments that permit smoking.

Healthy Orange

- As the **2nd healthiest county in North Carolina**, the Board of Health feels it is in the best interest of our citizens and those who visit Orange County to be provided with a healthy and smoke-free environment.

Q. Why did the BOH include smoke-free outdoor areas in the rule?

Impact of secondhand smoke outdoors

- Research indicates that, during active smoking, outdoor levels of secondhand smoke may be as high as indoor levels and may pose a health risk for people in close proximity (such as those sitting beside someone on a park bench).
- The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's report states that "Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful."
- The Surgeon General has concluded that the only way to fully protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of secondhand smoke is through 100% smoke-free environments.

Cleaner environment

- Cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in America.
- Outdoor smoke-free policies have been shown to decrease litter and therefore, reduce clean-up costs at outdoor areas.

It's good for our youth

- Creating smoke-free environments reduces opportunities for youth to learn the behavior of smoking.

Q. How does the Smoke-Free Public Places Rule differ from existing laws and ordinances?

- The rule broadens what was already in effect to include places such as government grounds, parks, recreational facilities and any enclosed facility where the public is invited such as lobbies and other common areas.

Q. Why is this Orange County's responsibility? Isn't smoking a personal choice?

- Local boards of health have the responsibility to protect and promote the public's health and to adopt rules necessary for that purpose (N.C. Gen. Stat. 130A-39(a)).
- The Orange County Board of Health wishes to minimize the harmful effects of smoking and eliminate secondhand smoke exposure for its citizens and the visiting public.
- Smoke-free laws help the seven out of every ten smokers who want to quit smoking by providing them with public environments free from any pressure or temptation to smoke.
- There is support for people who want to quit smoking. Smokers can talk to their health care provider about quitting and ask about appropriate medications available through their health insurance plan or employee's insurer. They can also use the free quitting support services of QuitlineNC at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or www.QuitlineNC.com.

Q. How is this rule being implemented and enforced?

- Beginning January 1, 2013, implementation includes a six month soft launch including public education about the new rule and reasons for it, posting signs and removing ashtrays and smoking receptacles. Fines go into effect on July 1, 2013.
- Most outdoor policies depend upon the cooperation of the public – generally those who frequent the areas. Since most people will refrain from smoking if they know a smoke-free policy is in place, the best way to enhance enforcement is to educate the public and local businesses about the policy early and often in the implementation process.
- According to the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch the State is currently receiving only 10 complaints per month about the Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law. High compliance is based on education and clear communication.

Q. Where can I find additional information?

- Secondhand Smoke Exposure (Source: NC Division of Health and Human Services): www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov/shs/index.htm
- Smoking and Health Effects (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/index.htm
- For help quitting tobacco use, call toll free 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.QuitlineNC.com

References:

1. CDC, Smoking and Tobacco Use Fast Facts, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/#toll
2. NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch (2011). The North Carolina Smoke Free Restaurants and Bars Law and Emergency Department Admissions for Acute Myocardial Infarction. A Report to the North Carolina State Health Director.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2010/consumer_booklet/index.htm
4. U.S. DEPT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVS., THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF INVOLUNTARY EXPOSURE TO TOBACCO SMOKE: A REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL 11, 14 -16 (2006), <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/report/index.html>.
5. CDC, Smoking and Tobacco Use Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm.
6. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: A Healthier Nation County by County. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/#app/north-carolina/2012/rankings/outcomes/overall>
7. Neil E. Klepeis, Wayne R. Ott, and Paul Switzer, *Real-time Measurement of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Particles*, 57 J. AIR & WASTE MGMT. Ass 'N 522, 522 (2007); Neil E. Klepeis, Etienne B. Gabel, Wayne R. Ott, and Paul Switzer, *Outdoor Air Pollution in Close Proximity to a Continuous Point Source*, 43 ATMOSPHERIC ENV'T 3155, 3165 (2009).
8. International Coastal Cleanup - 2007 Reports, www.oceanconservancy.org
9. Klein, E.G., Forster, J.L., McFadden, B. & Outley, C.W. (2007). Minnesota tobacco-free park policies: Attitudes of the general public and park officials. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. 9(1),49-55.
10. Tobacco Control Legal Consortium, There is No Constitutional Right to Smoke, Samantha K. Graff (2005), <http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/tclc-syn-constitution-2005.pdf>
11. Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids, Smoke-free laws do not harm business at restaurants and bars, 2011.
12. Tobacco Control Legal Consortium, Regulating Smoking Outdoors: Tips and Tools, <http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/tclc-guide-smokingoutdoors-2010.pdf>.