

### Three Non-Smoking Options

More than half of workplaces have some type of smoking policy, Rosner said. Percentages cited in studies by the Administrative Management Society and BNA range from the "high 60s to mid-80s," he said.

Rosner sees three "clear options" for setting up smoking policies: an outright ban on smoking, separately designated rooms with "beefed up" ventilation systems, and separate rooms with no ventilation changes.

According to Rosner, the most popular option is the separate smoking room with no ventilation changes. This option does not adequately protect people, he said, because the smoke "overwhelms the system." Separate rooms without separate ventilation systems are a "visible solution," according to Michael Eriksen, director of behavioral research at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas, but they do not take the carcinogen out of the air supply. Air cleaners are not the best solution either, he said, because they only remove the particulates -- which are in the tobacco smoke that you see -- but do not remove the invisible gases.

"Smoke is a difficult substance in a work environment," he said. "It sticks to things so it is a long-term item." Warshaw noted that companies with smoke-free environments have found that they save money in cleaning those workplaces.

"Either eliminate or isolate smoking, or beef up ventilation systems," he said.

Goebel, who is a lobbyist for Americans for Non-Smokers' Rights in Berkeley, Calif., said that separately sealed ventilation systems for smoking areas are not practical in most workplaces. The easiest policy to implement and enforce is to not permit smoking in workplaces, he said.

Ray Scannell, director of research for the Bakery, Confectionery, and Tobacco Workers, disputed the notion that ventilation systems cannot adequately filter ETS out of a building. The union's position is that the key to a clean indoor air environment is an adequately designed and well-maintained ventilation system, he said.

The majority of ETS problems usually can be traced to ventilation systems that cannot adequately filter smoke out of the building, Scannell said. But that problem means that other potential contaminants are in the air also. Scannell said his union works closely with the Sheet Metal Workers, which says it is "perfectly possible" to create a ventilation system to take care of environmental tobacco smoke.

Scannell said he can understand trying to separate smokers and non-smokers. Sidestream smoke -- that which is emitted from the burning tobacco between puffs -- is probably the most controversial issue, he said, especially for the worker situated between the smoker and the ventilation system.

The union official said he is absolutely opposed to total bans on smoking that "force people outdoors in Minnesota in midwinter, or in a neighborhood where you can get mugged."

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### Smoke-Free Workplaces Urged

The easiest smoking policy to implement is the smoke-free workplace, according to Eriksen and Regina Carlson of the New Jersey Group Against Smoking Pollution (GASP).

Carlson, who has been battling workplace smoking for 15 years, said her organization is finding that more and more companies are not even permitting smoking outdoors. Smoking, she said, is a drug addiction, a fire and safety hazard, and a health hazard.

Aside from no-smoking policies, separately enclosed, separately ventilated rooms are the only way to protect non-smokers from ETS, Carlson said. And increasingly, she said, "employers are asking why they should pay money to make it convenient for employees to hurt themselves."

Eriksen said he believes that if the EPA report is released essentially as is, it will have a significant effect on companies responding with smoking policies, since employers tend to respond to reports of carcinogens without waiting for regulations.

Eriksen said he definitely favors a smoke-free policy over other methods, as a result of the 1987 surgeon general's report, which concluded that involuntary exposure to passive smoke causes disease, including lung cancer, in otherwise healthy non-smokers. The report also said that separating smokers and non-smokers within the same air space does not eliminate the exposure of the non-smoker to environmental tobacco smoke.

A smoke-free policy is the easiest and simplest policy, and it "obviates the issue of splitting hairs over where smoking is allowed," Warshaw said. In "tight buildings" where the air is recirculated, a separate smoking room would have to be a place where the smoke-filled air would not be recirculated back into the plant. Separate ventilation systems are expensive, Warshaw noted, and the employer would have to decide whether to go to that expense.

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## TEXT:

Employer attitudes about workplace smoking policies have changed over the past five years and may change again, spurred by recent research by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In 1986, when BNA published the first edition of its special report on smoking, *Where There's Smoke: Problems and Policies Concerning Smoking in the Workplace*, employers were considering whether to restrict workplace smoking. When the second edition of the report came out in 1987, the question was not whether to restrict smoking in the workplace, but how to do so. And now, according to non-smokers' rights advocate Kevin Goebel, two recent draft reports by the Environmental Protection Agency on the hazards of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) on non-smokers may mean "the beginning of the end for smoking on the job."

The EPA reports -- a risk assessment and a policy guide -- were reviewed by a panel of 16 scientists, who said the available evidence shows that environmental tobacco smoke causes lung cancer (236 DLR A-4, 12/7/90).

As a result of the two reports, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has been gathering information on whether indoor tobacco smoke should be regulated as a workplace hazard, according to an OSHA spokesman.

The EPA risk assessment analyzed whether ETS causes lung cancer in non-smokers, according to Bob Rosner, executive director of the Seattle-based Smoking Policy Institute, a non-profit group that helps organizations tackle smoking issues. The policy guide, written by the institute, suggests ways to deal with ETS if it is a problem, Rosner said.

"Clearly there is persistent evidence that smoking is a serious risk factor for disease" and that secondhand exposure has been shown to cause health problems in non-smokers, Dr. Leon Warshaw, executive director of the New York Business Group on Health, told BNA. Smokers use more health benefits and take more time off work than non-smokers, he said.

The EPA report attributed 3,700 deaths from lung cancer caused by environmental tobacco smoke each year. Dr. Stanton Glantz, professor of medicine at the University of California Medical School, San Francisco, said that an additional 37,000 deaths annually are caused by heart disease induced by passive smoking. Moreover, just a few minutes' exposure can produce unhealthy effects, he said.

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