

THE #1 KILLER IN THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE IS...

SECONDHAND SMOKE. It causes lung cancer, heart disease, asthma and respiratory disease. Nobody should have to breathe it to hold a job.

We are not prohibitionists. We do not want to prohibit smoking. Smokers have every right to smoke and hurt themselves. They should not, however, have the right to hurt innocent people who don't want to breathe their smoke.

The public first learned that smoke from other people's cigarettes causes disease in 1986, when U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop reported that secondhand smoke was "a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy nonsmokers." Soon thereafter, the National Academy of Sciences released an independent report that drew the same conclusion.

Six years later, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also concluded that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and respiratory disease. In fact, the EPA classified secondhand smoke as a "Group A" carcinogen, along with asbestos, benzene, arsenic, and radon. It is illegal to expose workers to any Group A carcinogen — except tobacco smoke. *Secondhand tobacco smoke, however, kills more people than all other Group A carcinogens combined!* Each year, secondhand smoke causes 3,000 deaths from lung cancer of otherwise healthy nonsmokers; 62,000 deaths from heart disease; 26,000 new asthma cases; up to one million cases of aggravated asthma; and up to 300,000 cases of bronchitis and pneumonia in toddlers — 15,000 of which require hospitalization.

In the face of cynical attempts by tobacco interests to discredit the EPA report, the EPA strongly reaffirmed its conclusions. The National Cancer Institute validated the EPA study, and the World Health Organization answered tobacco industry distortions by issuing a press release entitled, "Don't let them fool you. Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer." Indeed, every major medical organization in the world agrees that secondhand smoke causes disease, including the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

Too many people are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their workplace — especially if they work in restaurants, bars and nightclubs. In a letter to the New York City Council, one bartender wrote, "Our environment is often reduced to a single room with no space to maneuver away from the toxic clouds of smoke. There is no ventilation system in the world that will work against smoke blown two feet away from your face."

The tobacco cartel claims that businesses will be hurt when laws require them to go smokefree, but the evidence proves that just the opposite is true. As movie theatres, Broadway theatres, airlines, trains, and sports stadiums have gone smokefree, patronage has *increased*, and sales tax data from restaurants shows that restaurant revenues have *increased* after smokefree policies were enacted. Smokefree environments are popular with customers.

The New York City Council passed historic legislation in 1995 to protect the health of New Yorkers by restricting smoking in restaurants seating more than 35 people and in other workplaces. Now, with the benefit of even more scientific evidence, the City Council should insist that all workplaces, including small restaurants, restaurant bars, and stand-alone bars and nightclubs, become 100% smokefree.

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NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO INHALE POISON TO HOLD A JOB

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If you are tired of breathing secondhand smoke, go to www.smokefree.org

Funded by the Coalition for a Smoke-Free City



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