

Rules proposed to curb smoking in federal offices

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WASHINGTON — The government yesterday proposed regulations to curb smoking in most commonly used sections of most federal buildings and offices around the country.

The regulations, drawn up by the General Services Administration, are similar to guidelines that the agency already has for no-smoking areas in the 10,000 federal buildings and offices it owns or leases.

The GSA said the regulations were needed "because smoke in a confined area may be irritating and annoying to non-smokers and may create a potential hazard to those suffering from heart and respiratory diseases or allergies."

Donald Winegarden of the GSA said the regulations would have "more weight and authority with federal agencies" than the current guidelines.

The regulations would add conference rooms to the list of no-smoking areas. Other places where smoking would be prohibited are auditoriums, classrooms, elevators and inside shuttle vehicles traveling between federal agencies.

The regulations will be published in Monday's Federal Register with 30 days allowed for public comment. Winegarden said they are not likely to take effect for 60 to 90 days.

He said the rules closely parallel smoking restrictions that Joseph A. Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, imposed on HEW buildings last January when he started an anti-smoking campaign.

An employee with a private office can declare that office a no-smoking area, the regulations say. And supervisors are told to plan work space to accommodate those who desire a no-smoking area, but not if efficiency is impaired, additional space is required or costly alterations are needed.

The GSA is the government's landlord and housekeeping agency. Military buildings, most post offices and Veterans Administration hospitals are outside its control and the regulations do not apply to them.

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