

SmokeFree Coventry

Achieving a Smoke Free Workplace

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www.smokefreecoventry.org.uk

Health Issues

In Coventry we estimate that about 500 people per year, or just under 17% of deaths are directly attributable to smoking ¹.

The introduction of smokefree environments will:

- reduce the risks to health from exposure to secondhand smoke
- recognise a person's right to be protected from harm and enjoy smokefree air
- increase the benefits of smokefree enclosed public places and workplaces for people trying to give up smoking
- save thousands of lives over the next decade by reducing both exposure to hazardous secondhand smoke and overall smoking rates

Health risks of secondhand smoke:

In reviewing the evidence of the health risks from secondhand smoke, the Government's Independent Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH) concluded that exposure to secondhand smoke causes a range of serious medical conditions, including:

- lung cancer
- heart disease
- asthma attacks
- childhood respiratory disease
- sudden infant death syndrome
- reduced lung function

Every credible medical and scientific organisation in the world – including the World Health Organisation, National Environmental Agencies, Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons – agrees that secondhand smoke causes serious illness and death in non-smokers



¹. Coventry Health Profile. Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust & Coventry City Council. February 2007

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What is secondhand smoke?

Secondhand smoke is simply other people's tobacco smoke and is also known as passive smoke or 'environmental' tobacco smoke.

Secondhand smoke consists of side stream smoke from the burning tip of the cigarette, and mainstream smoke exhaled by the smoker.

Side stream smoke typically makes up nearly 85% of the smoke in a smoky environment. This type of smoke contains a much higher concentration of toxins, such as hydrogen cyanide, ammonia, carbon monoxide and acrolein, than mainstream smoke. Secondhand smoke contains a cocktail of over 4,000 different chemicals, many of which are toxic and harmful including more than 50 known carcinogens such as benzo(a)pyrene, chromium, vinyl chloride, and benzene.

Killer Facts:

- Secondhand smoke is a killer. Scientific evidence shows that there is no safe level of exposure
- Secondhand smoke increases the risk in non-smokers of lung cancer by 24% and heart disease by 25%
- Just 30 minutes exposure is enough to reduce coronary blood flow
- Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals in the form of particles and gases—more than 50 are carcinogens
- Some groups of people, for example bar staff, are heavily exposed to secondhand smoke in their workplace

The invisible killer

Evidence shows that ventilation cannot control exposure to secondhand smoke:

- We know that 85% of secondhand smoke is invisible and odourless.
- Secondhand smoke is made up of gases and microscopic particles.
- Research has shown that to remove the risks of secondhand smoke, an enclosed premises would need wind tunnel-like rates of ventilation.
- Ventilation can actually distribute secondhand smoke throughout buildings.