

SMOKE-FREE CARS FOR KIDS



Minnesota's History of Enacting Public Health Policy

Historically, Minnesota has been a leader in public health and creating policies to protect the health of Minnesotans.

In 1975, Minnesota passed the Clean Indoor Air Act, making it the first state to introduce such a policy. The Act restricted smoking in public places and in some work places.

On October 1, 2007, Minnesota expanded the Clean Indoor Act by adopting The Freedom to Breathe Act, which prohibits smoking in virtually all indoor public places and indoor places of employment.

The Proposed Law

Smoke-free cars legislation would protect children, under the age of 18, from breathing in dangerous secondhand smoke while riding in a vehicle.

Minnesota would NOT be the first to pass this type of law.

Jurisdictions that ban smoking in vehicles that transport children include:

Arkansas	Louisiana
Maine	California
Puerto Rico	South Australia
Ontario	Yukon
Nova Scotia	British Columbia
Key Port, New Jersey	
West Long Branch, New Jersey	
Rockland County, New York	

Keep our kids safe from secondhand smoke!

The air quality in a car where someone is smoking can reach nearly 10 times over the hazardous levels set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

W. Ott, N. Klepeis, and P. Switzer, Air Change Rates of Motor Vehicles and In-Vehicle Pollutant Concentrations from Secondhand Smoke. Journal of Exposure Analysis and Environmental Epidemiology, 2007



Childhood Illness and diseases caused by secondhand smoke:

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS);
- Bronchitis;
- Pneumonia;
- Trigger asthma attack;
- Ear infections;
- Irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat;
- Respiratory symptoms, including cough, phlegm, wheeze, and breathlessness;
- Can lead to the development of heart disease, cancer and respiratory diseases in adulthood;

U.S. Centers for Disease Control

The Rationale

Reducing secondhand smoke exposure is a national priority. There are more than 50 carcinogens in secondhand smoke. Young children are especially vulnerable because their lungs and bodies are still developing and are especially sensitive to the toxins found in secondhand smoke.



Children in car seats are at greater risk as smoke pools in the back seat, where car seats are often located.

The Minnesota Legislature protected the health and safety of Minnesota children by passing seatbelt and car seat laws. To further protect our children's health, Minnesota must safeguard its children from secondhand smoke in cars.

Secondhand smoke exposure causes buildup of fluid in the middle ear. Middle ear infections are the most common cause of childhood operations and of childhood hearing loss.

California Environmental Protection Agency.
Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant. Executive Summary June 2005.



Children Deserve Protection From Secondhand Smoke

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently adopted a resolution encouraging all its members, state and local societies and chapters to: "support and advocate for changes in existing state and local laws by prohibiting smoking in any vehicle while a legal minor (under 18 years of age) is in the vehicle."

According to the Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey, approximately 17% of adults in Minnesota are smokers. With so many adult smokers, thousands of children remain unprotected from secondhand smoke. Additionally, more than 98,000 children in Minnesota have asthma. Secondhand smoke in vehicles puts them at even greater risk for severe asthma attacks and respiratory infections.

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"The best way to begin slowing the growth of health care costs is to promote wellness and prevent disease."

State Official's Guide to Wellness

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