



Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Reducing The Health Risks Of Secondhand Smoke

WHAT IS SECONDHAND SMOKE?



Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke exhaled by smokers and the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe. You also may have heard it called passive, or involuntary smoke. Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 substances. Many of them are dangerous poisons and can cause cancer. Anyone exposed to secondhand smoke inhales these substances.

Lung disease, including lung cancer, is the third leading cause of death in the US.

Secondhand smoke:

- Can cause lung cancer in nonsmokers; the US Environmental Protection Agency lists it as a Group A carcinogen, a rating used only for substances (i.e., asbestos) proven to cause cancer in humans.
- Will cause an estimated 3,000 lung cancer deaths this year.
- Can be a direct health threat to people who already have heart and lung diseases.
- Increases the risk of serious lung disease during the first two years of a child's life.

TOBACCO SMOKE IN YOUR HOME IS A THREAT TO EVERYONE

- Nonsmokers who live with smokers are more likely to develop lung cancer than other nonsmoking adults.
- If you have asthma, secondhand smoke can make your breathing problems worse.
- Young children are especially sensitive to secondhand smoke. A baby who lives in a home where one or both parents smoke is more likely to have lung disease serious enough to need treatment in a hospital during the first two years of life.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke in the home are more likely to cough and wheeze and to have middle ear problems.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY AT HOME

- Don't allow smoking in your home. Ask smokers to smoke outside or, if you must, limit smoking to a separately ventilated room.
- Be supportive. Help the smoker to quit.
- Place "Thank You for Not Smoking" signs around the house.
- Do not allow babysitters or others who work in your home to smoke in the house.

WHAT IF PEOPLE SMOKE WHERE YOU WORK?

NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) has determined that secondhand smoke may cause lung cancer in exposed workers.

- On-the-job exposure to secondhand smoke can be four times higher than in the home.
- Secondhand smoke can irritate your eyes, nose and throat.
- Some workers are already exposed to substances that can cause lung disease. Secondhand smoke in the workplace can only increase the danger.
- To protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke, the workplace must be totally smoke free or smoking must be limited to a separate, enclosed area with its own ventilation system. As of 1991, about 4 out of 10 American companies with smoking policies were smoke free.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR SMOKERS

Smoke free worksites can be tough on smokers. Here are some tips for coping:

- In smoke free areas, do something to take your mind off smoking. Take a walk or stretch. Have a glass of water or a light snack.
- If you must smoke, make sure you are not in a "No Smoking" area before you light up and don't let cigarettes smolder in ashtrays.
- Try to quit smoking.

WORKING FOR CLEAN AIR IN THE WORKPLACE

- First, find out your company's smoking policy. Ask what steps have been taken to protect the nonsmoker from second hand smoke.
- If you're not satisfied with the policy, talk to your employer.
- Be a leader in helping to draw up a fair plan for a smoke free workplace. Ask coworkers what they want and would be willing to do.

WHAT ABOUT EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE IN PUBLIC PLACES

More people are becoming worried about secondhand smoke and less willing to be exposed to it. About 82% of all adult Americans think that smokers should not smoke around nonsmokers.

To avoid or reduce second-hand smoke in public places:

- Make sure your child's day care, preschool, school and after-school programs are smoke free.
- Go to restaurants that are smoke free or have smoke free sections.
- Let smokers know that you do mind if they smoke around you.