

Rhinelandersafe SMOKE-FREE AIR FOR EVERYONE

RHINELANDER, WISCONSIN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SMOKE-FREE POLICIES

Why Do We Need Smoke-free Workplaces?

Secondhand smoke is deadly. It is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing as many as 60,000 nonsmokers every year. Ventilation systems cannot eliminate the dangerous toxins found in secondhand smoke. The only way to protect public health, therefore, is to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.

Doesn't banning smoking interfere with an individual's freedom of choice?

No. A smoke-free ordinance in Rhinelanders would not mean that smokers could not smoke; it would prevent smokers from smoking where they will harm others in the process. The public, especially children, should have the freedom to access public spaces without suffering serious health effects as a result of breathing secondhand smoke.

Why should government dictate what a private business does?

A chief priority of any government is to protect the general welfare of the public. The Rhinelanders City Council has a responsibility to pass and enforce public health ordinances that protect the safety of its citizens. Public health ordinances are already in place to ensure safe food and clean water ... the indoor air we breathe is just as important.

Aren't non-smoking sections enough to protect non-smokers and children?

No. Smoke doesn't stay in one section – it can't be corralled. Studies have found that patrons sitting in the non-smoking section of a restaurant for two hours inhale the equivalency of 1.5 cigarettes.

What about state-of-the-art ventilation systems? Can't they solve the problem?

Unfortunately, that is not the case. The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc. has confirmed that even the most modern ventilation systems can't remove the chemicals in secondhand smoke. In fact, you can't see or smell the most dangerous toxins in secondhand smoke.

Won't forcing restaurants to become smoke-free affect their bottom line?

Absolutely not. After reviewing hard economic data such as sales tax receipts, income and employment figures, studies have concluded that smoke-free ordinances do not hurt businesses. These studies have appeared in scientific journals and undergone vigorous peer review.