



NEWS RELEASE

HAZARDOUS LEVELS OF TOBACCO SMOKE MEASURED ON RESTAURANT AND BAR PATIOS IN OTTAWA

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, August 25, 2010

The measurement of tobacco smoke on bar and restaurant patios in Ottawa, taken on Friday, August 20, 2010 and on Monday, August 23, 2010, has revealed hazardous levels of small particulate matter when tobacco smoke was present.

Dr. Ryan David Kennedy, a researcher at the University of Waterloo, measured tobacco smoke on patios in the ByWard Market, along Elgin Street and Bank Street, and in Hintonburg.

“Our testing revealed that when tobacco smoke was present on outdoor patios, the levels of fine particulate matter were five to twenty times higher than measured background levels, with occasional peaks even greater than twenty times above background levels,” said Dr. Kennedy.

“Background levels were less than 10 micrograms per cubic metre. Some of the peak readings recorded were in excess of 700 micrograms per cubic metre. On one patio, the average readings were about 80 micrograms per cubic metre during an eight minute period of continuous smoking at an adjacent table. That’s equivalent to levels recorded during the Kelowna, B.C. forest fires,” explained Dr. Kennedy.

Dr. Kennedy measured tobacco smoke with a Sidepak measuring device. This device measures concentrations of very small particles, less than 2.5 microns in diameter. Most tobacco smoke particles are in this range.

These fine tobacco smoke particles are inhaled deep into the lungs. Many of the chemicals in fine tobacco smoke particulate are known cancer-causing agents. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Tobacco smoke poses a serious health risk to hospitality workers, children, seniors, and individuals with heart disease, lung disease, cancer and other chronic diseases.

“Wherever measurement was done, the results were consistent. Whenever tobacco smoke was present, we measured elevated, hazardous levels of fine particulate matter,” added Dr. Kennedy. “In one location, high levels of particulate matter were recorded in the smoking section of a patio.

When measurements were taken in the so-called “non-smoking section” of the same patio, located adjacent to and downwind from the smoking section, even higher readings were recorded,” concluded Dr. Kennedy.

“Dr. Kennedy’s research shows that everyone should be very concerned about the high levels of second-hand smoke that can occur on restaurant and bar patios in Ottawa,” said Suzanne Friedlaender, President of the Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health.

The City of Ottawa now lags far behind a growing list of Canadian cities that prohibit smoking on patios, including Kingston, Saskatoon, Victoria and Vancouver, in addition to all of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Alberta and the Yukon.

“The citizens of Ottawa deserve the same level of protection from tobacco smoke on patios,” concluded Ms. Friedlaender. “We urge Ottawa residents to express themselves in an online survey at www.smokefreeottawa.com.”

The Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health is a volunteer citizens group concerned about the continuing public health problem of exposure to second-hand smoke.

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Additional information and documentation:

<http://www.smokefreeottawa.com>

<http://www.smokefreeottawa.com/2006-en/sfos-poll.shtml>

<http://www.smoke-free.ca/factsheets/pdf/Smokefreepatios-final.pdf>

http://www.smoke-free.ca/pdf_1/2010/smoke-free-patios-population.pdf