



# Second-Hand Smoke in Public Places: A Message for Bar and Restaurant Workers

If you work in the hospitality industry, this fact sheet is for you. Scientific studies have proven that second-hand smoke is harmful to non-smokers and smokers alike, especially when they are exposed to high levels of smoke. As a result, food service workers are the least protected from second-hand tobacco smoke of any employee group.<sup>1</sup> But all that could change with a 100% Smoke-Free By-law in the new City of Ottawa.

## Did you know?

- Bar and tavern employees have higher rates of lung cancer than almost all other occupations, including fire fighters and miners.<sup>2</sup>
- The smoke from the burning, non-filtered end of the cigarette has higher concentrations of hazardous substances than the mainstream smoke inhaled by the smoker.<sup>3</sup> Of course, smokers are exposed to both.
- If it is busy in your establishment and you're working hard, you'll inhale even more second-hand smoke than usual because of your higher breathing rate.<sup>4</sup>
- Many people, especially smokers, don't believe that second-hand smoke is actually dangerous, but the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act* lists 15 substances that have **no safe level of exposure** - 6 of which are found in tobacco smoke.<sup>5</sup>

## How a 100% Smoke-Free By-law Could Help Your Health

- Less than two months after the implementation of a California law prohibiting smoking in bars, both smoking and non-smoking bartenders reported improved respiratory health and showed improved lung function.<sup>6</sup>

If you're a smoker working in the hospitality industry, you could really benefit from a smoke-free by-law by either cutting down on the number of cigarettes you smoke or using this as an opportunity to try quitting for good. But remember, smoking is a powerful addiction and it may take you several attempts before you succeed in quitting permanently. Try not to get discouraged. Working in a smoke-free environment will remove some of the temptation to smoke and make your efforts that much easier. Many people find quitting is easiest with the help of nicotine replacement therapy (patch or gum) or other drugs that help ease withdrawal symptoms. Contact your physician or pharmacist for help or call the Public Health Information Line at 722-2242.

**A 100% Smoke-Free by-law could help protect and even improve your health. You can help make sure that a 100% Smoke-Free By-law is implemented in Ottawa by logging onto [www.smokefreeottawa.com](http://www.smokefreeottawa.com) to express your support or call the Public Health Information Line at 722-2242.**

**SMOKE-FREE  
OTTAWA  
SANS FUMÉE**

<sup>1</sup> Siegel, M., "Involuntary smoking in the restaurant workplace: a review of employee exposure and health effects", Journal of the American Medical Association, July 1993; 270 (4): 490-493

<sup>2</sup> "Secondhand Smoke", Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Auto Workers, Secondhand Smoke: Butt It Out pamphlet

<sup>4</sup> Quan, C: Comparing Environmental Tobacco Smoke Intake Among Restaurant Workers and Adults at Home, found at: [www-mcnair.berkeley.edu/98journal/cquan/](http://www-mcnair.berkeley.edu/98journal/cquan/)

<sup>5</sup> Regulations of Ontario, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 833 Schedule Part 10 - Known Toxic Agents for Which Exposure Values Have Not Been Established, and to Which Any Exposure Should be Avoided

<sup>6</sup> Eisner, M.D. et al, "Bartenders' Respiratory Health After Establishment of Smoke-Free Bars and Taverns", Journal of the American Medical Association, 1998, 280:1909-1914, also found at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v280n22/rfull/joc80922.html>