



## SECONDHAND SMOKE: TOBACCO INDUSTRY MYTHS & FACTS -- FACT SHEET #3

The tobacco industry and its allies have formulated a series of tactics and attacks to counter the nation-wide movement to protect the health of all workers. However, none of these arguments effectively or even truthfully counters the need to make *all* workplaces smoke-free. Following are some of the more common tobacco industry arguments and tactics heard and the counter-arguments that debunk these myths.

*MYTH: The tobacco industry consistently claims that forcing restaurants and other hospitality facilities to go smoke-free will negatively impact their revenues.*

**FACT:** This is simply not true. Several studies and the examples of California, Colorado, Ft. Wayne, IN, Austin, TX, Mesa, AZ and a number of municipalities around the country show no adverse effects, and even some economic gains, for businesses following the enactment of smoke-free ordinances.

*MYTH: The tobacco industry claims that the decision to go smoke-free should be left up to the establishment based on the choices of their customers and employees.*

**FACT:** The majority of people – including many smokers -- favor smoke-free establishments. Secondhand smoke is a health hazard to all exposed to it. All workers – and patrons – have the right to a safe, smoke-free environment. Businesses should be able to set business practice until it affects public health, and then regulations are needed.

*MYTH: The tobacco industry claims that diners and prospective employees can choose where they dine and work so that no one is forced into an establishment that allows smoking.*

**FACT:** Everyone has a right to breathe clean, smoke-free indoor air, the same as eating safe food and drinking clean water. Knowing the severe health effects of secondhand smoke, there is no reason for allowing smoking in restaurants and all other places of employment.

*MYTH: "How far will the government go? Soon they'll be after fast food and salt."*

**FACT:** Sure, fast food causes severe health problems, as does salt, dairy products and alcohol, if not used in moderation and as part of a well-balanced diet. **BUT ONE PERSON'S DIET DOESN'T ENDANGER OTHERS; ONE PERSON'S SMOKE AFFECTS EVERYONE ELSE.** There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke! Even trace amounts are harmful and can be especially harmful to people with heart conditions and respiratory ailments.

*MYTH: The tobacco industry likes to claim that smoke-free ordinances adversely affect tourism.*

**FACT:** Quite the contrary. Studies have shown that smoke-free ordinances often coincide with increases in tourist revenues. International tourists are even more accepting of smoke-free restaurants than Americans are, according to data from a 1989 Philip Morris study.



Working to protect the health of workers and patrons through a smoke-free workplace ordinance in Illinois.

Secondhand Smoke Kills. Everyone Deserves Smoke-Free Indoor Air.

<http://www.smokefreeillinois.org>