

Ventilation and Tobacco Smoke

“Exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke (SHS) cannot be controlled by air cleaning or mechanical air-exchange” (U. S. Surgeon General Report, 2006, chapter 10, section 10)

Ventilation Systems and/or Smoking Rooms

These are ineffective and costly. There is no safe level of exposure to SHS, and there is no ventilation system that will prevent SHS from permeating nonsmoking areas.

Ventilation sometimes removes odor and larger particles, but cannot remove the harmful chemicals and gases in SHS. Smoking rooms offer no protection for employees who work in those areas, putting employees at risk.

Ventilation Does Not Effectively Protect Nonsmokers from SHS

- Establishing a smoke-free environment is the only effective way to protect nonsmokers from SHS.
- There is no risk-free level of exposure to SHS. Even low levels of exposure can harm nonsmokers' health.
- Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.
- Current heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems alone cannot control SHS exposure. In fact, these systems can distribute SHS throughout a building.
- The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), a U.S. standard-setting body on ventilation issues, states that ventilation systems cannot remove SHS from indoor environments.
- Even separately enclosed, separately exhausted, negative-pressure smoking rooms cannot keep SHS from spilling into adjacent areas. In practice, employees are often required to enter such rooms to perform their job duties. Employees and patrons in such rooms are likely to be exposed to especially high levels of SHS.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), concludes that:

The medical community agree that SHS is a health risk, causing lung cancer and heart disease in adults, and both causing and worsening asthma, lower respiratory illnesses and other harms to the respiratory health of children.

Currently the only way to effectively eliminate the health risks associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking indoors.

“Because of ASHRAE’s mission to act for the benefit of the public, it encourages

elimination of smoking in the indoor environment as the optimal way to minimize (SHS) exposure. This definition includes smoke produced from the combustion of cannabis and controlled substances and the emissions produced by electronic smoking devices.”

References:

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