

# Smoke-Free Environments

*A Booklet For Day Care Providers*

Clean Air Council





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*Dear Day Care Provider:*

**A**s a day care provider, parents entrust you with the care and safety of their children. Clean Air Council would like to work with you to help you better protect the children in your care by reducing their exposure to tobacco smoke pollution (secondhand smoke). There are laws governing tobacco smoke in day care facilities of which I am sure you are aware, but Clean Air Council would like to encourage you to go beyond these minimum restrictions and adopt a smoke-free policy for your center. Such a policy would protect both children and employees. By not allowing smoking at or around your center, you are starting the children off on a healthy, smoke-free life.

As part of its Children's Environmental Health Program, the Council has prepared *Smoke-Free Environments: A Booklet For Day Care Providers*. This guide will give you the information that you need to make decisions about limiting tobacco smoke in your facility. The booklet even contains a sample smoke-free policy that can be directly adopted or adapted to fit your needs. The important role you play in the life of the children puts you in a unique position to protect their health.

The guide contains information about the dangers of secondhand smoke, resources to increase your knowledge of important issues, and ideas for sharing the materials with parents and your employees.

The Council would be happy to visit your facility and speak to you, your employees, and parents on the issue of tobacco smoke pollution and its impact on children. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Council at 215-567-4004. You can also find more information on the Council's website at [www.cleanair.org](http://www.cleanair.org).

Thank you for protecting the lives of our children.

Sincerely,

Joseph Otis Minott, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Clean Air Council

## Information on Tobacco Smoke Pollution

### What is TSP:

Tobacco Smoke Pollution (TSP) is a combination of side-stream smoke, or smoke that is emitted by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and mainstream smoke, or smoke that is exhaled by the smoker.

### Chemicals in TSP:

There are over 4,000 chemicals in TSP, including at least 40 that have been designated as known human carcinogens (cancer causing substances). At least 13 of these chemicals are not allowed in food by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In addition to chemicals naturally occurring in tobacco, many chemicals are added to help preserve the tobacco, increase the absorption of nicotine, mask harsh taste, and otherwise affect the tobacco. Ammonia, for example, is added to tobacco because it alters the acidity of the smoke and aids in the absorption of nicotine.

### Some of the chemicals in TSP are:

**Ammonia** — As in the nasty smelling chemical you use to clean your kitchen floors.  
Health Effects: Exposure to ammonia can cause severe eye damage and trigger asthma attacks.

**Formaldehyde** — The fluid used to embalm dead people.  
Health Effects: Creates an increased risk for a number of cancers, and it is also linked to respiratory problems such as coughs, chronic bronchitis and shortness of breath.

**Cresol** — One of the main uses of cresol is in explosives.  
Health Effects: Long-term exposure to cresol leads to elevated blood pressure, headaches, nausea and vomiting.

**Nicotine** — You've probably heard of this one. But did you know that it is also used in tranquilizing darts for wildlife? It was also used in insecticides, but is now banned for that use.  
Health Effects: Nicotine is considered responsible for many of the psychological and physiological effects of using tobacco. Studies show that nicotine exposure can result in seizures, vomiting, depression of the central nervous system and growth retardation.

For more information on the toxicity of a specific chemical, you may visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ToxFAQs website at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html).

Tobacco Smoke Pollution (TSP), Secondhand Smoke (SHS), and Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) are all just different terms for the same thing.

## Health Impacts of TSP:

The health impacts of exposure to tobacco smoke pollution are well established.

As far back as 1986, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report that concluded:

- Involuntary smoking causes diseases, including lung cancer, in healthy nonsmokers;
- Simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers does not eliminate risk;
- Children of parents who smoke have increased frequency of respiratory illnesses.

In 1991, the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) released a report that concluded:

- Secondhand smoke poses an increased risk of lung cancer and possibly heart disease to people exposed in the workplace;
- The only two methods by which nonsmokers can be protected in the workplace are:
  - Complete elimination of smoking in the building;
  - Establishment of separate, enclosed smoking areas that are separately ventilated and directly exhausted to the outside.

In 1992, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report that established:

- ETS is a Group A (known human) carcinogen;
- ETS exposure in children increases the risk of lower respiratory tract infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia;
- ETS exposure in children irritates the upper respiratory tract, and is associated with a small, but significant reduction in lung function;
- ETS exposure in children is a risk factor for new cases of asthma.

In 1996, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a study that concluded:

- 88% of nonsmokers have significant daily exposure to secondhand smoke;
- Children generally receive 50% more exposure than the average adult.

Tobacco smoke contributes to the following illnesses:

- Lung cancer
- Nasal sinus cancer
- Mouth and throat cancer
- Respiratory disease
- Acute lower respiratory tract infections in children
- Asthma
- Middle ear infections
- Chronic respiratory symptoms
- Eye and nasal irritation in adults
- Heart disease mortality
- Acute and chronic coronary heart disease morbidity

In women, TSP may also contribute to:

- Miscarriages
- Cervical cancer
- Low birth weight of child
- Osteoporosis

TSP also worsens cystic fibrosis disease marked by overproduction of mucus in the lungs. TSP decreases lung function and increases the chances of smoke-caused coughs, wheezing, bronchitis, pneumonia, and eye and ear problems.

### **Special Concerns for Children:**

Why is TSP exposure more serious for children?

- Young people, unlike adults, do not have fully-developed immune systems. Therefore, exposure to TSP does more damage to a child's health than an adult's.
- Children inhale more air in relation to their body weight and are therefore exposed to proportionally greater quantities of TSP than adults.
- Children get physically closer to adults than another adult would, and consequently suffer greater exposure to TSP.
- Infants can not move away from the smoke.

**Health impact of TSP on infants include:**

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Middle ear infections
- Adverse impact on cognition and behavior during childhood development
- Low birth weight (maternal exposure)

**Health impacts of TSP on children:**

- Middle ear infections
- 50% more likely to be hospitalized for severe respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia, and bronchitis than other children
- 50% more likely to develop asthma
- Greater chance that asthma attacks will be more frequent and more serious
- Reduced rate of lung growth
- May contribute to cardiovascular disease in adulthood

**Protecting Children from Tobacco Smoke Pollution**

As a day care provider, you are in a unique position to protect children from the harm of TSP. Not only can you make sure that your facility is completely smoke-free, but you can start a dialogue with both smoking and nonsmoking parents on what they can do to better protect their children from TSP.

It is important to understand that the law merely provides the minimum that day care providers must do to protect children from TSP. It would be far better to make sure your center is totally smoke-free. In the back of this booklet you will find a proposed smoke-free policy for your facility.

**Once you have a written smoke-free policy:**

- Please make sure you inform parents, staff, delivery people, and visitors of the policy. Let parents know about the smoke-free policy and ask them to follow the same rules when at your facility. Smoke-free signs and messages can be hung around the facility to help remind staff and parents of your policy.
- Make sure all staff and volunteers receive training that includes the health risks of tobacco smoke pollution (TSP).

**Talking to Parents about TSP:**

As a day care provider you are also in a good position to discuss TSP with parents. If you have adopted a smoke-free policy for your day care, this is the best place to start a dialogue with parents on TSP. Carefully go over the facility's no-smoking policy, why the daycare adopted such a policy, and emphasize that the policy applies to everyone who visits the facility.

**Talking to parents who are non-smokers:**

Discuss with parents the importance of minimizing their child's exposure to TSP. You might want to:

- Have materials on TSP and its impact on children available for parents to take home.
- Discuss with parents where their children are most likely to be exposed to TSP. Include the home, friend's homes, restaurants, and cars.
- Encourage parents to have a firm no-smoking policy at home.

**Talking to parents who are smokers (or whose family members smoke):**

It is important to engage such parents in a positive, non-judgmental manner. Parents want to protect their children. Your role is to provide parents with the information they need to make better decisions concerning TSP and their child. Most professionals who work on TSP issues take a Good, Better, Best approach. That involves dealing with the parents where they are today and helping them get to the next step in adopting behaviors that will protect their child from TSP. In working with smoking parents, it is **good** to convince them not to smoke while their child is in the room. It is **better** to convince them to smoke outside. It is **best** to convince them to not smoke around children. While these are different levels of success, each is better than nothing.

## What Does The Law Require?

Pennsylvania regulates smoking in day care centers under Pennsylvania Code Title 55. Facilities registered as Child Day Care Centers and Group Child Day Care Centers must meet the following:

- Cigarettes, pipes or cigars may not be smoked in a child care space, or a play space or a food preparation area when children are in care or when food is being prepared.
- Ashes and cigarette or cigar butts are prohibited in a child care space, a play space or a food preparation area.

*See 55 Pa. Code 3270.68 and 3280.68. These two types of day care are quite similar in other respects, although the Group Child Day Care Center is generally limited to 6 to 16 children but may be located in a residence. The Child Day Care Center, by contrast, may not be located in a residence, and must have at least 7 children, although there is no upper limit.*

Day care facilities registered as Family Day Care Homes have only slightly different requirements with regards to tobacco:

- Cigarettes, pipes or cigars may not be smoked in indoor or outdoor child care space or food preparation areas when children are in care in the space or when food is being prepared.
- Ashes and cigarette or cigar butts are prohibited in a child care space, a play space or a food preparation area.
- At the time of a child's enrollment, the operator of the daycare center must inform the parents of the facility's smoking policy.

*See 55 Pa. Code 3290.66. Family Day Care Homes are those that provide care for 4-6 children and are located in a residence, other than one of the attending children's homes.*

The Pennsylvania Code sections for each of these types of day care facilities present the minimum level of compliance necessary to receive the Department of Public Welfare's certificate of registration.

In addition, some day care facilities must comply with the more general terms of the federal law. The Federal Pro-Children Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-227, Part C Environmental Tobacco Smoke) prohibits smoking in day care facilities that receive federal funding, however, the law does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, or facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds. For more information on the Pro-Child Act, contact:

Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Smoking and Health  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
330 C St. SW., Room 1229  
Washington, DC 20201  
(202) 205 8598 — [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



### Sample Child Care Center Policy

**Smoke-Free Policy:**

\_\_\_\_\_ is a smoke-free facility.

Due to the acknowledged health threat to young children from exposure to tobacco smoke pollution, it is the policy of this facility to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and parents. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and applies to employees, parents, and visitors to the facility.

**DEFINITION:**

1. There will be no smoking in any area of the child care center at any time. This includes both indoor and outdoor areas.
2. There will be no smoking in any day care vehicle at any time. There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting children on child care authorized activities.
3. Field trips, walks, and all other off-site activities and functions will be smoke-free.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Child care employee*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Child care supervisor*

## Resources

**Clean Air Council**

<http://www.cleanair.org>

**American Academy of Pediatrics**

<http://www.aap.org>

**American Cancer Society**

<http://www.cancer.org>

**American Heart Association**

<http://www.americanheart.org>

**American Lung Association**

<http://www.lungusa.org>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

<http://www.cdc.gov>

**Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention**

<http://www.nlcatp.org>

**National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids**

<http://www.tobaccofreekids.com>

**National Safety Council's Environmental Health Center**

<http://www.nsc.org/ehc.htm>

**United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/index>.

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