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Risks from secondhand smoke

For children, the home is a major source of secondhand smoke, but is not covered by current smoke-free laws.

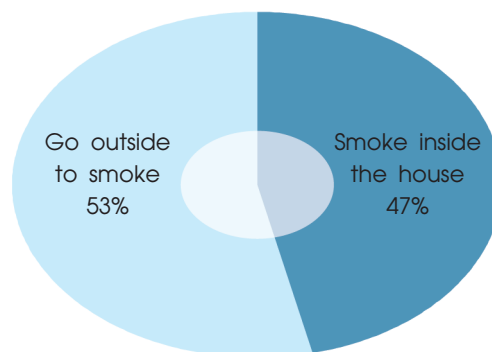
Prepared by Action on Smoking and Health

Almost one half of fathers who smoke do so in the house, putting their children at risk.

When non-smokers inhale smoke produced by smokers, this is called 'passive smoking'. As soon as a smoker lights up, two types of smoke are produced: smoke from the cigarette itself, and smoke exhaled by the smoker. Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, of which 250 are dangerous, and more than 50 cause cancer. The Environmental Protection Agency of California, the World Health Organization, and other scientific bodies agree that secondhand smoke can cause cancer, even when the amounts inhaled are very small. Non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke face risks almost as great as the smokers themselves. Moreover, the risks are greatest for children. Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke at home, since this is where they spend the most time.

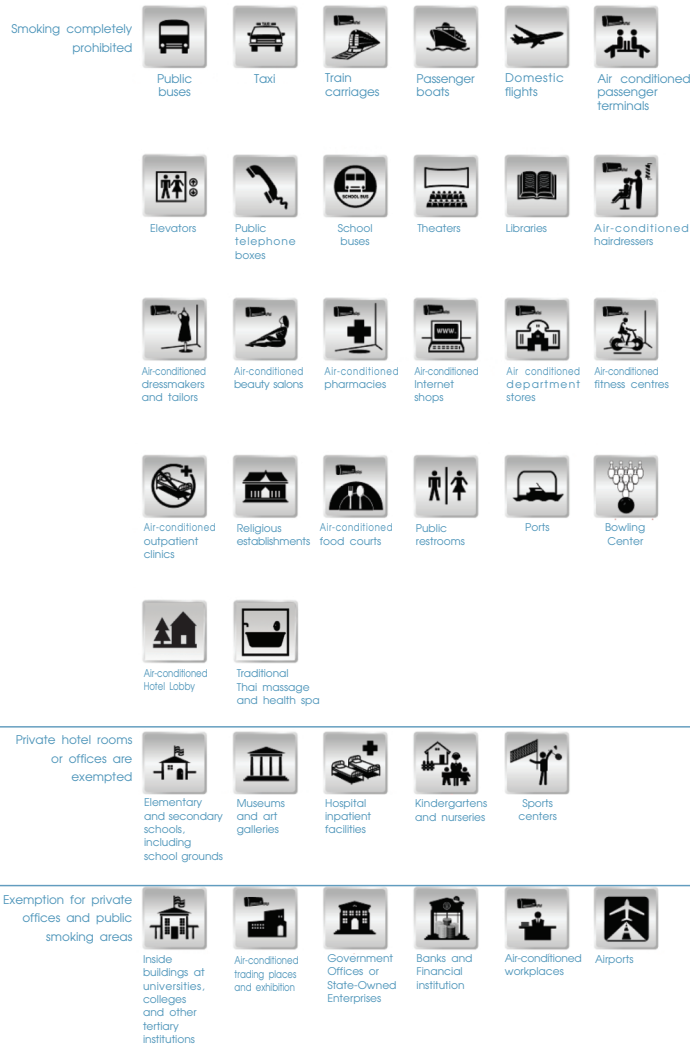
The regulations on smoke-free zones established by the Protection of the Health of Non-Smokers Act 1992 prohibit smoking in public places and workplaces. These regulations help protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. However, the regulations do not cover private houses. It is therefore important to campaign to protect children from secondhand smoke.

Where do adults smoke?

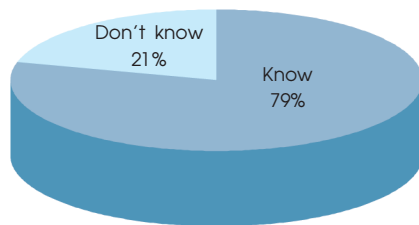


Source: ABAC Poll survey "Children's attitudes towards parents who smoke : A case study of Year 2-4 students in Bangkok", 2004

Smoke- Free zone as defined by the Act

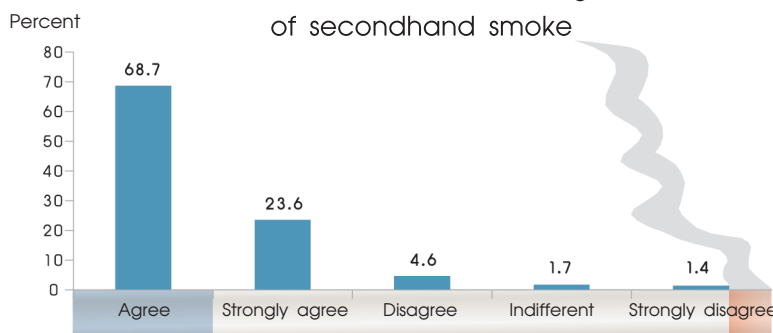


Knowledge about the Protection of the Health of Non-Smokers Act 1992, declaring that government offices must be smoke free



Source :Professor Dr Montha Kengkanpanit and colleagues, "Implementation and Attitudes towards the Protection of Health of Non-Smokers Act 1992". The Center for the Management and Control of Tobacco, Department of Health Education and Behavior, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University

Attitudes towards the dangers of secondhand smoke



Source: International tobacco control policy (Thailand) adolescents survey wave (2005)

The 2005 Annual Report from the United States Department of Health states that people exposed to secondhand smoke suffer the following effects

- ⊗ People exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work have a 25-30% greater chance of developing heart diseases, and a 20-30% greater change of developing lung diseases.
- ⊗ Secondhand smoke has an immediate effect on the cardiovascular system

Pregnant women

- ⊗ Pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke face an elevated risk of low birth weight babies.
- ⊗ Elevated risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Small children

- ⊗ Increased risk of respiratory infections and asthma
- ⊗ Increased risk of infections of the inner ear
- ⊗ Over the long term, retards development of lungs

Results of testing for PM 2.5 in Bangkok workplaces

1. In 39 workplaces where smoking is banned, the average particulate matter was 36 micrograms per cubic meter
2. In 15 workplaces where smoking is not banned, the average particulate matter was 48 micrograms per cubic meter

Note: The safe level of PM 2.5 is 15 micrograms per cubic meter (Environmental Protection Agency, USA). The level of PM 2.5 is directly related to the level of cigarette smoke.

Source: Associate Professor Charoenkha and colleagues, 'Global Air Monitoring Study: A Multi-Country Comparison of Levels of Indoor Air Pollution in Different Workplaces. Results from Thailand'. May 2005 (Unpublished report)

PM (Particulate Matter) is fine dust in the air due to, for instance, fuel combustion, factories, automobile pollution, and construction.

Particulate matter that is less than 10 microns wide can be inhaled. This means that particular matter between 10 and 2.5 microns wide can come into contact with the respiratory system, with severe effects on the victim.