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of Hawai‘i*

*American Lung Association
of Hawai‘i*

*Cancer Research Center
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of Education*

*Hawai‘i State Department
of Health*

Hawai‘i Medical Association

*Hawai‘i Medical Services
Association*

*Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive
Health Center*

*Ko‘olauloa Tobacco Free
Coalition*

*East Hawai‘i Tobacco Free
Coalition*

*Kauai Tobacco Free Community
Coalition*

Maui Tobacco Free Partnership

*West Hawai‘i Tobacco Free
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*Clifford Chang, MPH, CHES;
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*Toni Ann Symons
Grass Roots Advocacy
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*Beth Kuch
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Reasons to Make Businesses Smoke-Free

Why are smoke-free workplaces important?

The evidence continues to grow — there is now no doubt that exposure to secondhand smoke is a health hazard and causes life-threatening illnesses.

- Over 53,000 deaths each year in the U.S. are attributed directly to secondhand smoke exposure.
- Recent studies clearly demonstrate the negative effect of secondhand smoke on heart and respiratory functions in healthy adults.
- Other studies have shown how secondhand smoke triggers asthma attacks and contributes to respiratory infections.
- **No adverse effect on business.** Smoke-free policies do not negatively affect business, and sometimes boost it, according to studies that use sales tax data and sound research methods.
- **Employees support smoke-free policies.** In 2000, the amount of employees who thought that smoking should not be allowed in indoor workplaces ranged from 66.4% in Wisconsin to 83.8% in DC. (CDC, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 50(49): 1101-1106, December 14, 2001.) Most smokers accept smoke-free policies and 70% want to quit smoking (National Cancer Institute).
- **Reduced maintenance costs.** Furniture lasts longer and burn holes are avoided in tablecloths, carpets, or cloth coverings. Repainting ceilings, walls, and replacing window coverings yellowed by tobacco smoke is eliminated. A survey of 2,000 workplaces found that 23.3% of those with smoking restrictions had a reduction in maintenance costs. (Swart, “An Overlooked Cost of Employee Smoking” Personnel, August 1990.)
- **Eliminates discomfort.** 59.2% of nonsmoking employees report suffering discomfort, and even 15% of smoking employees report some discomfort from secondhand smoke. (CDC, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 22, 1992.)
- **Reduced insurance costs.** Many insurance companies offer lower rates for smoke-free businesses because of healthier employees and reduced fire risk. The National Fire Protection Association found that in 1998 smoking materials caused 8,700 fires in non-residential structures resulting in 17 deaths, 163 injuries, and a direct property damage of \$60.5 million. (Hall, Jr., J.R., “The U.S. Smoking-Material Fire Problem,” National Fire Protection Association, Fire Analysis and Research Division, April 2001.)

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- **More productive workers.** Secondhand smoke harms the health and reduces the productivity of nonsmokers. Estimated costs associated with secondhand smoke's effects on nonsmokers range from \$56 to \$490 per smoker per year. (Kristein, "How Much Can Business Expect to Profit From Smoking Cessation?" *Preventive Medicine*, 1983;12:358-381)
- **Healthier workers.** By removing secondhand smoke from the workplace, many employees' health will improve. Additionally, smokers will smoke fewer cigarettes helping to improve their health. A study investigated the effects of smoke-free workplaces and found that there was increased cessation and decreased consumption corresponding to a 29% relative reduction in tobacco use. (Fichtenberg, C.M.; Glantz, S.A., "Effect of smoke-free workplaces on smoking behavior: systematic review," *British Medical Journal* 325: 188-191, July 27, 2002.)
- **Reduced liability.** As a business owner, if you subject your employees to dangerous situations, you may be liable if they develop diseases or injuries. Workers exposed to secondhand smoke on the job are 34% more likely to get lung cancer. (Fontham, et al. *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, 1991; 135: 35-43.)
- **Less workplace deaths.** In 2002, the International Labor Organization (ILO) reported that cancer was the largest killer in the workplace with approximately 640,000 workplace-related deaths per year globally. ILO stated that secondhand smoke in the workplace is estimated to cause 2.8 percent of all workplace cancer. (Reuters, May 24, 2002.)