

## Steps for Enacting a 100% Smokefree Airport Policy

- ❑ **Smokefree airports are now the norm.** This is important information to convey as you into discussions about helping your local airport go smokefree. Travelers from around the U.S. and the world now expect a cleaner, healthier, smokefree environment when arriving at or flying through your airport.
  - Most major airports in the U.S. are now 100% smokefree indoors, and many restrict where smoking can occur outside the airport.
  - As of January 2020, **31 of the 35 busiest U.S. airports are 100% smokefree**, and two thirds of these airports do not permit the use of e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices. In total, **more than 600 U.S. airports are 100% smokefree** due to local or state law or airport authority policy.
  
- ❑ **Determine the decision-making channels for the airport.** Airport policies can be adopted by a variety of decision-makers: administrators and managers, airport commissions and boards, city councils or county supervisors, and even by state law. Airline officials and food service companies also often have the power to eliminate smoking in their areas.
  - Determine which decision-makers are most likely to have the ability to make the airport smokefree and are in a willing position to take action.
  - Provide these officials with information about the health risks associated with secondhand smoke exposure, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ineffectiveness of ventilation and smoking rooms, and smokefree policies in other airports.
  - Request a meeting with the appropriate administrators about enacting a smokefree policy.
  
- ❑ **Generate support.** Widespread support from airport and airline employees, airport patrons, and members of the public will help provide momentum for the policy to be adopted. Local voluntary health associations or nonsmokers' rights groups may be able to help with this.
  - If possible, get supportive local organizations to send announcements to their members.
  - Get supporters to send letters of support to the appropriate administrators. Personal letters or emails with anecdotal accounts of problems with the current smoking policy work the best.
  - Develop a media strategy that includes action alerts, fact sheets, press releases, editorial board visits, letters to the editor, talk shows, etc. Media attention focused on secondhand smoke will help educate the public about the issues.
  - Establish a database of grassroots supporters who can help your campaign.
  - Reach out to a wide variety of networks and organizations so that your effort will represent a cross-section of the community. Everyone has something to gain from a smokefree airport.

- **Educate decision makers and be prepared for controversy.** Sometimes these policies are adopted without fanfare or controversy -- but sometimes, especially if the tobacco industry becomes mobilized, there can be considerable debate.
  - Make sure you have provided information about other airports' smokefree policies and the tobacco industry's interference with smokefree policies to decision-makers before the opposition gets to them. The correct information provided in advance can inoculate decision-makers against the tobacco industry's lies and misinformation.
  - Tobacco industry-sponsored "accommodation" programs over the years encouraged airports to construct expensive ventilation systems and smoking rooms as an alternative to going smokefree. The industry's own internal documents show how they target airports in the U.S. and around the world to build smoking lounges—often sponsoring brand-name smoking lounges—and they continue fighting to keep airports from becoming smokefree.
  - Prepare several knowledgeable spokespersons with information about smokefree airports so they can publicly address and debate the issues.
  - Remember that conflict can be your friend: healthy debate on the issue of secondhand smoke helps engage the public.
  
- **Advocate for a strong 100% smokefree policy.** Adopting a 100% smokefree policy is the only way to protect the health of airport patrons and employees. Tobacco industry-sponsored ventilation and smoking rooms are ineffective because they do not eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.
  - Health experts agree that ventilation systems address only the odor – not the health hazards – associated with secondhand smoke. The U.S. Surgeon General concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, no ventilation system can completely remove the cancer-causing and toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke, and establishing smokefree environments is the only proven way to prevent exposure.<sup>1</sup> Even Philip Morris stated, "While not shown to address the health effects of secondhand smoke, ventilation can help improve the air quality of an establishment by reducing the sight and smell of smoke and by controlling smoke drift."<sup>2</sup>
  - Even completely enclosed and separately ventilated smoking rooms are ineffective because they do not fully prevent smoke from escaping into other areas of airports, and they do not protect workers who must enter those rooms as part of their job.
  - The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) states that ventilation cannot eliminate the health dangers posed by secondhand smoke and "the only means of effectively eliminating health risk associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity."<sup>3</sup> ASHRAE's Standard 62.1 states that acceptable indoor air quality is incompatible with secondhand smoke. In 2015, ASHRAE updated Standard 62.1 to include marijuana smoke and aerosol from e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices in the definition of secondhand smoke.<sup>4</sup>
  - A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report in 2012 looked at indoor air quality at nine large U.S. airports with and without designated smoking areas, which found that ventilated rooms and designated smoking areas in airports are not effective in eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke. The air pollution inside the smoking areas was 23 times higher

than levels in smokefree airports, and air pollution levels from secondhand smoke outside the smoking areas were five times higher than levels in smokefree airports.<sup>5</sup>

- It is healthier, simpler, and more cost-effective for an airport to go 100% smokefree rather than create smoking rooms that are expensive to install, expensive to maintain, and expose people in the airport to secondhand smoke.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> [n.a.]. "Policies, Practices & Positions: Public Place Smoking, Reasonable Ways to minimize Secondhand Smoke," [www.pmusa.com](http://www.pmusa.com), Downloaded on October 3, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Samet, J. et al, "ASHRAE position document on environmental tobacco smoke," *American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)*, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality, [2015 Addenda Supplement to ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2013](#). January 23, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "[Indoor air quality at nine large-hub airports with and without designated smoking areas – United State, October-November 2012](#)," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 61(46): 948-951, November 23, 2012.