

Benefits of a Smoke-Free By-Law

○ Second-hand Smoke & Cessation

Smoke-free outdoor spaces by-laws act as a way to protect citizens from exposure of Second Hand Smoke (SHS) by limiting the number of public places in which individuals can smoke, and thus reducing the risk of SHS exposure [1]. Second hand smoke is associated with many negative health outcomes such as heart disease, lower respiratory infections, asthma, and lung cancer [2]. Smoke-free outdoor spaces can encourage tobacco users to quit because there are fewer areas to smoke. Quitting smoking considerably improves an individual's life expectancy & quality of life, in addition to many health-related benefits such as a decreased risk for heart disease [3]. Smoke-free by-laws may also help individuals cut down on the amount of cigarettes that they smoke. In 2009, a post-implementation evaluation of Woodstock's smoke-free by-law revealed that 42% of tobacco users surveyed reported that the by-law helped them reduce the number of cigarettes they smoked. Furthermore, 26% of tobacco users surveyed cited that the smoke-free bylaw made them more likely to quit [1].

○ Role Modelling

The creation of a smoke-free by-law may also influence the social acceptability of smoking. It has been shown that the less youth observe smoking in public places, the more likely they are to think smoking is socially unacceptable. Policies that restrict smoking in public places also helps to reduce both the visibility and perceived acceptability of smoking among other age groups such as adults [4]. The implementation of the recommendations will further reinforce this positive role modelling.

○ Economic Impact & Cost Savings

The development of smoke-free policies may have a positive impact on the hospitality industry. A review study that looked at 97 articles related to the economic effects of smoke-free policies on the hospitality industry found that well-designed studies reported either a minimal or positive impact on restaurant and bar revenue [5]. Similarly, a study that evaluated the amended Toronto Smoke-Free By-laws reported that compared to tobacco users, non-smokers significantly increased their use of smoke-free spaces such as parks and beaches [6].

Smoke-free policies may have a positive environmental impact on areas such as parks and beaches. Cigarette butt litter is the most common form of litter in the world and is often a main cause of pollution in outdoor spaces [7]. Cigarette-related litter may also have a significant impact on environmental clean-up costs [8]. An evaluation of the City of Hamilton's smoke-free by-law revealed that there was less cigarette butt litter in parks and recreation properties after a smoke-free by-law was implemented.

○ Cigarette Litter & Fire Safety

Comprehensive by-laws can help reduce the amount of cigarette litter that is found in outdoor places such as beaches and waterways. Cigarette butts pose a serious litter and toxic waste disposal problem, as they are made from non-bio-degradable material. It has been reported that cigarette butts are the most common form of litter collected in clean-up projects [9]. Cigarette litter may also pose great risks to both children and animals. If these butts are eaten by young children or animals, they can cause harmful effects that range from vomiting to death related to nicotine poisoning [9]. Cigarette butts are the leading cause of

fire-related deaths. When cigarettes are improperly disposed of in outdoor environments, they can pose a serious fire risk [11].

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