

## Second-Hand Smoke Talking Points for Use by Raze Crews:

Secondhand smoke is also known as *environmental tobacco smoke* (ETS) or *passive smoke*. It is a mixture of 2 forms of smoke that come from burning tobacco: *sidestream smoke* (smoke that comes from the end of a lighted cigarette, pipe, or cigar) and *mainstream smoke* (smoke that is exhaled by a smoker).

When non-smokers are exposed to secondhand smoke it is called *involuntary smoking* or *passive smoking*. Non-smokers who breathe in secondhand smoke take in nicotine and other toxic chemicals just like smokers do. The more secondhand smoke you are exposed to, the higher the level of these harmful chemicals in your body.

### Why is secondhand smoke a problem?

#### *Secondhand smoke causes cancer*

Secondhand smoke is classified as a "known human carcinogen" (cancer-causing agent) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US National Toxicology Program and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a branch of the World Health Organization.

Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemical compounds. More than 60 of these are known or suspected to cause cancer.

#### *Secondhand smoke causes other kinds of diseases and deaths*

Secondhand smoke can cause harm in many ways. In the United States alone, each year, it is responsible for:

- An estimated 46,000 deaths from heart disease in non-smokers who live with smokers
- About 3,400 lung cancer deaths in non-smoking adults
- Other breathing problems in non-smokers, including coughing, mucus, chest discomfort, and reduced lung function
- 50,000 to 300,000 lung infections (such as pneumonia and bronchitis) in children younger than 18 months of age, which result in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations annually
- Increases in the number and severity of asthma attacks in about 200,000 to 1 million children who have asthma
- More than 750,000 middle ear infections in children
- Pregnant women exposed to secondhand smoke are also at increased risk of having low birth-weight babies

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➤ *Secondhand smoke kills children and adults who don't smoke and makes others sick (Surgeon General's report)*

The 2006 US Surgeon General's report reached some important conclusions:

- Secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and in adults who do not smoke
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes breathing (respiratory) symptoms and slows lung growth in their children
- Secondhand smoke immediately affects the heart and blood circulation in a harmful way; over a longer time, it also causes heart disease and lung cancer
- The scientific evidence shows that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke
- Many millions of Americans, both children and adults, are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and workplaces despite a great deal of progress in tobacco control
- The only way to fully protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke indoors is to prevent all smoking in that indoor space or building. Separating smokers from non-smokers, cleaning the air and ventilating buildings cannot keep non-smokers from being exposed to secondhand smoke
- Secondhand smoke is associated with low birth weight for gestational age
- Children whose mothers smoked during pregnancy have an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- The EPA estimates that passive smoking is responsible for between 150,000 and 300,000 of these infections in children under 18 months annually
- According to the EPA, between 200,000 and 1,000,000 kids with asthma have their condition worsened by secondhand smoke every year. Also, passive smoking may also be responsible for thousands of new cases of asthma every year
- Chronic respiratory symptoms such as cough and wheezing may be attributed to secondhand smoke
- Children who breathe in secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from dental cavities, eye and nose irritation, and irritability
- Exposure to secondhand smoke causes build-up of fluid in the middle ear, resulting in nearly 800,000 physician office visits yearly
- Secondhand smoke is responsible for between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in infants and children under 18 months of age, resulting in between 7,500 and 15,000 hospitalizations each year and causes 430 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths in the U.S. annually

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- In the United States, 21 million, or 35 percent, of children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke in the home on a regular basis. Approximately 50-75 percent of children in the United States have detectable levels of cotinine, the breakdown product of nicotine, in the blood.

## Where is secondhand smoke a problem?

*You should be especially concerned about exposure to secondhand smoke in these 4 places:*

### At work

The workplace is a major source of secondhand smoke exposure for adults. Secondhand smoke meets the standard to be classified as a potential cancer-causing agent by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency responsible for health and safety regulations in the workplace. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), another federal agency, also recommends that secondhand smoke be considered a possible carcinogen in the workplace. Because there are no known safe levels, they recommend that exposure to secondhand smoke be reduced to the lowest possible levels.

Secondhand smoke in the workplace has been linked to an increased risk for heart disease and lung cancer among adult non-smokers. The Surgeon General has said that smoke-free workplace policies are the only way to do away with secondhand smoke exposure at work. Separating smokers from non-smokers, cleaning the air and ventilating the building cannot prevent exposure if people still smoke inside the building. An extra bonus, other than protecting non-smokers, is that workplace smoking restrictions may also encourage smokers to quit.

- Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at work are at increased risk for adverse health effects. Levels of secondhand smoke in restaurants and bars were found to be 2 to 5 times higher than in residences with smokers and 2 to 6 times higher than in office workplaces.
- Workplace productivity is increased and absenteeism is decreased among former smokers compared with current smokers.
- The National Cancer Institute has found that being employed in a workplace where smoking is prohibited is associated with a reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked per day and an increase in the success rate of smokers who are attempting to quit.

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## **In public places**

Everyone can be exposed to secondhand smoke in public places, such as restaurants, shopping centers, public transportation, schools and daycare centers. Some businesses seem to be afraid to ban smoking, but there is no proof that going smoke-free is bad for business. Public places where children go are a special area of concern.

## **At home**

Making your home smoke-free may be one of the most important things you can do for the health of your family. Any family member can develop health problems related to secondhand smoke.

Children are especially sensitive to secondhand smoke. Asthma, lung infections and ear infections are more common in children who are around smokers. Some of these problems can be serious and even life-threatening. Others may seem like small problems, but they add up quickly; think of the expenses, doctor visits, medicines, lost school time and often lost work time for the parent who must take the child to the doctor. In the United States, 21 million, or 35 percent, of children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke in the home on a regular basis. About 50 percent to 75 percent of children in the US have detectable levels of cotinine, the breakdown product of nicotine, in their blood.

Think about it: we spend more time at home than anywhere else. A smoke-free home protects your family, your guests and even your pets.

## **In the car**

Americans spend a great deal of time in cars and if someone smokes there, hazardous levels of smoke can build up quickly. Again, this can be especially harmful to children. In response to this fact, the US Environmental Protection Agency has a special program to encourage people to make their cars, as well as their homes, smoke-free. And some states have laws that ban smoking in the car if carrying passengers under the age of 17.

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## Additional Facts About Secondhand Smoke

- The 2006 Surgeon General's Report on secondhand smoke concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Short-term exposure can potentially increase the risk of heart attacks
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke. Secondhand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals known to be toxic or carcinogenic, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic ammonia and hydrogen cyanide
- A 2009 report by the Institute of Medicine confirmed that secondhand smoke is a cause of heart attacks and concluded that relatively brief exposure could trigger a heart attack
- Secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,400 deaths from lung cancer and 22,700 to 69,600 deaths from heart disease each year
- Research into previously-secret tobacco industry documents reveals that research conducted by cigarette company Philip Morris in the 1980s showed that secondhand smoke was highly toxic, yet the company suppressed these findings during the next two decades
- Guidelines to Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control state that there is "no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke." Creating 100 percent smoke-free environments is the only way to protect people from the harmful effects of second-hand tobacco smoke
- Separate or ventilated smoking areas do not protect non-smokers from second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke can spread from a smoking area to a non-smoking area, even if the doors between the two areas are closed and even if ventilation is provided. Only 100 percent smoke-free environments provide effective protection

\*All facts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, World Health Organization, and the American Lung Association.

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