

Costs and Benefits of Smoking and Smoke-Free Policies in the Workplace

The costs of smoking at work:

- Current smoking is associated with a 60% increase in the risk of lost workdays for men and 15% increase in risk of lost workdays for women.¹
- Smoking at work is associated with a higher prevalence of industrial accidents, occupational injuries and a higher rate of disciplinary actions.²
- \$82 billion in productivity losses are caused by smoking each year.³
- A Michigan study found that smokers spend 39 minutes of each work day on smoke breaks.⁴

Smoke-free policies are associated with smoking cessation:

- Nearly 70% of the US workforce worked under a smoke-free policy in 1999; 74% worked under a smoke-free policy in MN in 1999, up from 54% in 1993.⁵
- Smokers who are employed in workplaces with smoking bans tend to consume fewer cigarettes per day, are more likely to be considering quitting and quit at a greater rate than smokers employed in workplaces with no or weaker policies.⁶
- Teenagers who worked in smoke-free work sites were 68% as likely to ever smoke than those who worked in less restricted work sites.⁷
- Smoke-free workplaces not only protect non-smokers from passive smoking but also encourage smokers to quit or reduce their consumption, reducing the total cigarette consumption per employee by 29%. To achieve similar results through taxation would require cigarette taxes to increase from \$0.76 to \$3.05 per pack.⁷
- Working in a smoke-free workplace is more strongly correlated with successful quitting than physician advice or use of nicotine replacement products.⁸

Economic benefits of a smoke-free workplace:

- Cessation programs are relatively low-cost and yield financial returns over the long-term that far outweigh their costs. A theoretical model for the U.S. estimates potential long-term net benefits of a smoking cessation program at around \$4.5 million for large employers.⁹

¹ Robbins A, et al. Short term effects of cigarette smoking on hospitalization and associated lost workdays in a young health population. *Tobacco Control*, 9:389-96, 2000.

² Ryan J, et al. Occupational risks associated with cigarette smoking: a prospective study. *Am J Public Health*, 82:29-32, 1992.

³ US Department of the Treasury. The economic costs of smoking in the US and the benefits of comprehensive tobacco legislation, 1998.

⁴ EPIC/MRA, 2000.

⁵ Shopland D, et al. State-specific trends in smoke-free workplace policy coverage: the current population survey tobacco use supplement, 1993-1999. *J Occupational & Environmental Med*, 43 (8): 680-86, 2001.

⁶ Brownson R, et al. Effects of smoking restriction in the workplace. *Annual Rev Public Health*, 23: 333-48, 2002.

⁷ Fichtenberg C, et al. Effect of smoke-free workplaces on smoking behavior: Systematic review. *British Medical Journal*, 325, 2002.

⁸ National Cancer Institute. Population based smoking cessation. NIH Pub #00-4892, 2000.

⁹ Warner KE, et al. Health and economic implications of a work-site smoking cessation program. *J Occupational & Environmental Med*, 38: 981-992, 1996.