

Frequently Asked Questions

**Why do we need an outdoor-air ordinance? How dangerous can secondhand smoke be *outside*?**

Studies show that concentrations of outdoor Secondhand Smoke can equal indoor levels (NJ GASP, 2012). Additionally, for children and older people with asthma and/or heart conditions, even small amounts of cigarette smoke in outdoor areas can have dangerous consequences.

Secondhand smoke is not the only reason to pass such an ordinance. Other reasons include:

* Establishing smoke-free environments as the norm; the fewer adults that children see smoking, the less likely they are to pick up a cigarette
* Eliminating the concern of discarded cigarette butts that are ingested by small children and animals
* Reducing accidental fires
* Reducing litter-related clean-up costs

**Our police department is busy enough. They don’t have time to enforce a smoking ban.**

There are approximately 160 municipalities in the state of New Jersey with Smoke-Free Outdoor Air Ordinances. In a telephone survey conducted in Central New Jersey in March of 2012, zero municipalities reported a problem enforcing the ordinance, zero summonses had been issued, and the police were not called upon.

The vast majority (85%) of New Jerseyans do not smoke. In the municipalities that have enacted ordinances, the remaining 15% have shown that they respect signs.

**We can’t enforce a smoking ban without signs, and we don’t have money for signs in our budget right now.**

Tobacco Free for a Health New Jersey can provide signs to post throughout your parks, recreation areas and/or beaches at no cost to you.

**The government keeps taking away more and more individual rights. Where’s it going to end?**

* A report released in New York City in June, 2012, revealed that since passing indoor and outdoor smoking bans, life expectancy in NYC has increased by 10 years.
* Children, the elderly, asthmatics, and nonsmokers all have a right to breathe clean air.
* These laws are not about punishing smokers, or taking away rights. They are about improving the health of the community and helping to raise a generation of nonsmokers.

**If people can’t smoke in our playgrounds and recreation areas, or on our beaches, they aren’t going to come.**

Data following the 2006 New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act, as well as data from states throughout the country consistently show that business revenues *increase* in smoke-free environments.

Again, the vast majority (85%) of New Jerseyans, and therefore 85% of New Jersey consumers are nonsmokers. Appealing to their needs and preferences can only improve business and utilization of recreation areas.