

CLEARING THE AIR ABOUT VENTILATION SYSTEMS



Ventilation systems and air filtration devices may help clear some tobacco smoke, but none can effectively clear all the toxic gases and poisons in secondhand smoke. These devices may pose a hidden danger by creating a false sense of security for businesses seeking to reduce the health risks of secondhand smoke as well as potential lawsuits stemming from exposure to secondhand smoke.

The US Surgeon General, the Environmental Protection Agency, The National Cancer Institute, and other agencies agree that technology for the cost-effective filtration of tobacco smoke in the air is currently not available.

The Best Solution - and most economical solutions to the problem - is to eliminate smoking in confined spaces.



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Ventilation Systems...
Will they protect your workers
and patrons from tobacco smoke?

VENTILATION AND ACCOMODATION

Can ventilation systems eliminate the risk of disease or death due to secondhand smoke?

The answer is crystal clear: absolutely not. Every reputable technical, scientific and medical expert, and even the very companies touting these ventilation systems, including Philip Morris, agrees that these systems cannot eliminate health risks due to secondhand smoke.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE)

This recognized standards-setting body for the ventilation industry has issued Standard 62-1999, Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality:

"recirculation of air through a building's ventilation system results in secondhand smoke from the smoking are appearing in the nonsmoking areas well...Given that tobacco smoke is a carcinogen, we have difficulty addressing how you can have comfortable indoor air quality in the presence of carcinogens" (1996). They concluded that there is no known safe ventilation of smoke.

ASHRAE states in an interpretation to this standard that Standard 62-1999 is and shall be in the future based upon "an assumption of no smoking" for most indoor places, including restaurants. In spite of efforts by Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds and other tobacco interests to dismantle Standard 62-1999, the American National Standards Institute rejected the tobacco industry appeal and reaffirmed ASHRAE's standard in 2000. (<http://www.ashrae.org/standards/6206.htm>)

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)

"...from the industrial hygiene perspective, general ventilation as delivered by heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems, is not an acceptable engineering control measure for controlling occupational exposures to [environmental tobacco smoke] ETS."

(Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Federal Register notice of proposed rulemaking, "Indoor Air Quality", FR 59:15968-16039, April 5, 1994.)

The Environmental Protection Agency

Recommends that: "exposure to environmental tobacco smoke be minimized wherever possible. The most effective way to minimize exposure is to restrict smoking to smoking areas that are separately ventilated and directly exhausted to the outside, or by eliminating smoking in the building entirely." ("Environmental Tobacco Smoke," Indoor Air Facts No. 5, June 1989. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.) Furthermore, former EPA official and physicist James Repace concluded in a June 2000 report:

"...it is clear that dilution ventilation, air cleaning, or displacement ventilation technology even under moderate smoking conditions cannot control the secondhand smoke risk to de minimis levels for workers or patrons in hospitality venues without massively impractical increases in ventilation Smoking bans remain the only viable control measure to ensure that workers and patrons of the hospitality industry are protected from exposure to the toxic wastes from tobacco combustion."

(Repace, James, Report for the California Department of Health Services, Repace Associates, Inc., June 2000.)

It's bad enough that Big Tobacco tries to panic restaurant and bar owners into opposing cost-free smoke free measures. Adding insult to injury, it also tries to sell you on costly, ineffective ventilation systems instead.

In spite of the consensus among scientific and technical experts that ventilation cannot eliminate health hazards attributable to secondhand smoke, tobacco control advocates should be on the look out for tobacco-funded ventilation experts appearing at council hearings to present yet another tobacco industry misinformation campaign: the ventilation lie.

As a variation on the theme of Accommodation, the tobacco industry and its allies have rallied around the flag of "ventilation solutions" as a "reasonable" alternative to enacting public policies requiring smoke free establishments.

Spearheaded by the Philip Morris Options program in which Philip Morris partners with ventilation consultants, manufacturers and hospitality industry organizations- the tobacco industry's ventilation strategy seeks to mislead policymakers and the public and to create the public perception that ventilation can address the issue of secondhand smoke and, therefore, that smoke free air policies are unnecessary.

