

Hotels & Motels to Go Smoke-Free on July 1

New Vermont Law Extends Protections Against Secondhand Smoke to More Places

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BURLINGTON – New tobacco restrictions that go into effect on July 1 will extend protections from secondhand smoke to hotels and motels, school grounds and sponsored events, childcare facilities, state-owned buildings – and in motor vehicles when young children are passengers.

“Tobacco is still the #1 real killer for smokers, and there is no safe level for exposure to secondhand smoke,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “Act 135 expands the protections of our current laws to workers and children especially, and sends a strong and consistent message that we support healthy, smoke-free spaces for everyone.”

With Act 135, Vermont will become only the sixth state in the nation to make lodgings establishments 100 percent smoke-free. The law will protect visitors and the more than 11,000 adults who work in the accommodations and lodging industry, including those who clean rooms and are exposed to smoke residue that stays on furniture, carpeting and walls. Other states with such laws are Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wisconsin.

“We are fully supportive of this law, and believe it will enhance our reputation as one of the healthiest and safest places to visit and stay in the nation,” said Tourism & Marketing Commissioner Megan Smith.

Despite existing smoking restrictions, 48 percent of adult Vermonters report exposure to secondhand smoke at home, in a vehicle, at work or in a public place in the past week, according to the *2012 Vermont Adult Tobacco Survey*.

Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke, which causes respiratory illnesses, ear infections and lasting damage to a young child’s developing organs and immune system. One in five children in grades six through eight report being exposed to secondhand smoke in a car in the past week, according to the *2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*.

In 1987 Vermont enacted its first smoke-free workplace law, and in 1993 was the first state to have a comprehensive clean indoor air act, and the state has been strengthening tobacco policies and laws ever since.

The new law also –

- bans tobacco use and the use of tobacco substitutes, including e-cigarettes, on all **public school grounds and at public school sponsored functions**.
- expands protections for children in **licensed childcare facilities** by banning the use of tobacco products and tobacco substitutes on the premises at all times, both indoors and outdoors.
- bans tobacco use and use of tobacco substitutes in **registered family child care homes** when children are in care, and parents must be informed if smoking occurs in the home at other times.
- bans smoking in **motor vehicles** when a child young enough to be in a car seat or booster seat (younger than age 8) is present.
- establishes a 25-foot smoke free boundary around all **State-owned buildings** and offices, and requires that all State-owned and operated hospitals or secure facilities have a smoke-free campus. The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital will be smoke-free when it opens.
- bans the sale of **liquid or gel substances that contain nicotine** (such as e-cigarettes) unless the product is contained in child-resistant packaging. This restriction will go into effect on January 1, 2015.

“Starting July 1, Vermonters will have more protection from secondhand smoke exposure in our cars, workplaces, hotels and motels,” said Rebecca Ryan, senior director of health education and public policy for the American Lung Association in Vermont. “The Lung Association applauds the Legislature and Gov. Shumlin for standing up for health, especially the health of Vermont’s children, and we urge all smokers who are considering quitting to join the 802 Quits movement.”

In 2012, 17 percent of adult Vermonters smoked. The *Healthy Vermonters 2020* goal is 12 percent or less. In 2013, 13% of students in grades 9-12 smoked. The Healthy Vermonters 2020 goal is 10% or less.

- **For help quitting tobacco**, including free gum and patches, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, visit 802Quits.org and find a Vermont Quit Partner near you.
- **For more information** about Vermont’s Smoke-free laws, tobacco control data and resources and 802 Quits, visit healthvermont.gov/prevent/tobacco.

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