

CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY



Smoke-free outdoor spaces

Key Facts

- Tobacco is the single biggest cause of preventable death in the province
- Each year, approximately 1,550 Saskatchewan people die because of tobacco use
- Even outdoors, there is no safe exposure to second-hand smoke
- Hundreds of Canadian municipalities, including **Saskatoon, Warman and Martensville** have passed outdoor smoke-free bylaws to protect the health of their citizens

Is there public support for outdoor smoke-free bylaws in Saskatchewan?

A 2014 Ipsos Reid poll found that the majority of Saskatchewan residents strongly support more outdoor smoke-free policies including on patios of restaurants and bars.

- 91% support banning smoking on children's playgrounds
- 81% support banning smoking on all sports fields (e.g. soccer pitchers, baseball diamonds, etc)
- 87% support ban on smoking in any fixed seating or bleachers
- 70% support ban on smoking on all outdoor patios at restaurants and bars
- 77% support smoking ban on municipal property used for public gatherings (e.g. festivals, concerts, exhibition grounds, etc)

A 2015 Praxis Analytics survey of 564 Regina residents found similar results.

What can municipalities do?

Saskatchewan's Tobacco Control Act allows municipalities to implement bylaws and policies that exceed the requirements set out in provincial legislation.

- Protect workers and patrons by not permitting smoking on patios of restaurants and bars
- Protect children by making playgrounds, parks and sports fields smoke-free
- Protect the public by banning smoking in outdoor places where people gather

Why implement a smoke-free outdoor bylaw in public places?

Protects health

Second-hand smoke (SHS) is extremely toxic. Several studies have shown that SHS in an outdoor setting can be as concentrated as indoors. Children do not have a choice when it comes to exposure. Toddlers, infants and children can't simply relocate themselves when faced with second-hand smoke.

Increases motivation to quit

Many people who smoke respond to smoking restrictions by cutting back or quitting. Conversely, a 2014 study in the British Medical Journal found that people exposed to smoking on patios of a bar or restaurant were less likely to try quitting and more likely to relapse after quitting.

Decreases negative role modeling for children

If children and youth are not exposed to adult smoking, they are less likely to think of it as normal behaviour. This is especially important for public health since most people who smoke start before they are 18.

Reduces litter and protects the environment

Prohibiting smoking in outdoor locations would reduce the number of discarded butts. Reduced litter will lower municipal clean-up costs. A 2007 study from Alberta found that tobacco related litter outnumbered other types of litter by 3:1. Tobacco butts can also be lethal for children, fish, birds and other animals may ingest them.

Reduces fire risk

Smoking increases the risk of fire. An outdoor smoking bylaw would reduce this risk by controlling the places where smoking is allowed.

How much does outdoor smoking affect health?

Studies conducted at Stanford University and repeated in Ontario by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit examined particles in outdoor smoke under various conditions. The studies revealed:

- Depending on air conditions outdoors, average levels of smoke within half a meter from a single cigarette source are comparable to indoor levels. This is particularly concerning for hospitality workers who work in outdoor restaurant and bar patios that allow smoking.
- Even outdoors, someone who is standing near a lit cigarette or other tobacco product could breathe in wisps of smoke that could be tens or hundreds of times more concentrated than normal background air pollution levels.

Will making restaurant and bar patios smoke-free affect local business?

Five provinces and dozens of municipalities including Saskatoon, have adopted laws to ban smoking on outdoor patios of bars and restaurants. To date, none have reported a negative economic impact as a result of the ban.

Research indicates there are potential economic benefits including reduced insurance and cleaning costs, reduced staff absenteeism, increased productivity and lower insurance premiums associated with a workforce that smokes less and is not exposed to SHS in the workplace.

A comprehensive list of smoke-free bylaws can be found at www.nsra-adnf.ca/cms/smoke-free-laws-database.html



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