

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER

The Health Effects of the No Smoking in Public Places Bylaw and Rates of Tobacco Use in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

May 2006

Prepared by Public Health Services



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Acknowledgements:

Public Health Services wishes to acknowledge the efforts of many stakeholders in moving the agenda forward on controlling the involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke in public places. In particular we would like to acknowledge the City Councils of the Cities of Saskatoon and Humboldt for their role in being at the forefront in enacting progressive social policy in relation to the issue of smoking in public places.

We also acknowledge the long term efforts of People for Smoke-Free Places, the Lung Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, Saskatchewan Coalition for Tobacco Reduction and Mental Health and Addiction Services (SHR) for their ongoing commitment to identifying problems and solutions that have brought us closer to protecting the public from the many diseases and problems caused by smoking and second-hand smoke.

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Introduction

When the City Council of Saskatoon passed a bylaw restricting exposure to second-hand smoke of non-smokers in July of 2004, it was quickly hailed as important, progressive social legislation which supported national trends that show more and more Canadians recognize that tobacco smoke is dangerous for one's health.

Six months following the enactment of the city bylaw, the government of Saskatchewan implemented a province-wide ban on smoking in public places. The provincial bylaw addressed the issue of smoking in indoor public establishments, and *covered* patios where smoking would no longer be permitted. This restriction of smoking to include enclosed (or covered) outside spaces remains the significant area of difference between the two bylaws; where the city bylaw prohibits smoking on all types of outside enclosures and patios associated with public establishments, *covered or not covered*, the provincial bylaw is less restrictive. At first glance, this distinction may appear minor; however, it is significant in terms of public health promotion and the ability to create a more equal playing field for businesses in Saskatoon. It is recognized that an important aspect in comprehensively addressing the harmful effects of smoking must begin first by addressing the prevalence of this behaviour in the community. This can be achieved by various means, and one way is to *denormalize*¹ the behaviour of smoking in public by legislation, price increases or reviewing tobacco product placement in the consumer market place. This is usually the starting point of addressing smoking behaviour which for a number of years has been aggressively marketed as the desirable life-style choice of "sophisticated people", and by the forward placement of tobacco products at grocery store check-out counters etc.

When the provincial law went in to effect on January 1, 2005 there were some questions raised about how this law would impact bars and restaurants all over the province. Claims were made that this bylaw could adversely affect employment, particularly in the food service industry.

¹ Denormalize (function here as a verb) the opposite of normalize i.e., to change what has come to be accepted as the norm or standard

Almost one year following the province-wide ban, and a year and a half following the municipal ban, the catastrophic economic predictions have not come to pass. A randomly selected sample of city of Saskatoon residents tell us that they support the ban and state that they visit restaurants more often now as they are breathing cleaner, safer air. In addition, we observe that some acute health status indicators have begun to show a downward trend such as hospital admissions/discharges for an acute myocardial infarction (Acute MI or “heart attack”).

Since the bylaw has been in effect, virtually all establishments are compliant with the law with only 13 warnings were issued in 2005. More importantly, the health of all the citizens of Saskatoon who visit public establishments, customers and workers alike, are now protected from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

Data gathered so far shows that:

- Hospital admissions/discharges for acute myocardial infarctions have been reduced by 10% in the first year;
- Self reported prevalence of smoking in the community has been reduced by 4.7%;
- Community knowledge and attitudes in regards to the adverse effects of smoking remain high with 93% of community residents in a random telephone survey stating that they think smoking is dangerous to their health;
- 79% of Saskatoon residents support the bylaw banning smoking in public places;
- 52% support inclusion of patios in the bylaw

While most of the arguments from those opposed to implementing a restriction on smoking in public places rests on the adverse economic impact of such policies, it is important to keep in mind the primary intent of the law: to protect the health of the public and workers in public establishments from the adverse effects of exposure to second-hand smoke. Just 30 minutes of exposure to second-hand smoke produces some of the same physical reactions that can occur due to long-term smoking, and can increase heart attacks in non-smokers who are sensitive to this trigger.

The harmful effects of tobacco smoking are well documented. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and illness in Canada. It is estimated that in Canada, a person dies from a smoking-related disease every 12 minutes. Smoking is the cause of over 85 per cent of lung cancers and is responsible for over 30 per cent of all cancer deaths each year. Smoking is a significant cause of heart disease; pulmonary disease, including pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema; and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smoking also contributes to stroke, chronic lung disease, diabetes, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

This report is divided in to the following 8 sections:

1. Public opinion survey results (2005)
2. Compliance with the no smoking in public places bylaw
3. Smoking prevalence
4. Health effects – acute myocardial infarction
5. Attitudes of restaurant / nightclub owners (employers)
6. Attitudes of restaurant / nightclub employees
7. Economic impact
8. Future legislative considerations

Public Opinion Survey Results (2005)

The majority of the residents of the City of Saskatoon support a no smoking in all public places bylaw. This has been the consistent finding in two rounds of surveys conducted by Public Health Services. Prior to the municipal ban, 71% of Saskatoon residents agreed that smoking should not be permitted in all public places and more than one year after the municipal ban 79% of residents of Saskatoon support the no smoking in all public places policy. In fact, some residents state that they are now more likely to visit smoke free establishments, especially restaurants. It is interesting to note that many residents do not attend some types of establishments, and this represents a trend that pre-dates the no smoking bylaw. Specifically in the 2005 PHS telephone survey² of 1,250 residents selected at random, the following were the findings on the knowledge, attitude and behaviour parts of the interview.

Was the smoking ban a good idea?	79% yes
Does second-hand smoke bother you?	69% yes
Is second-hand smoke hazardous to your health?	93% yes

Table 1 represents attendance at Public Places³ of Entertainment. In summary:

- 15% of these respondents reported back that they had been to smoke-free restaurants more often since the passage of the law, while 70.5% said their rates of eating out is about the same as it was before. Only 8.6% reported that they had gone to restaurants less as a result of the law, giving a net increase of 6.4%.
- 11% of respondents reported back that they had been to bars more often since the passage of the law, while 30% said they go out at about the same rate as before. Only 7.3% reported that they had gone to bars less as a result of the law, giving a net increase of 3.7%.

² Telephone survey methods: A third party was used to generate home telephone numbers at random. Of those contacted, 65% agreed to participate. In total, 1250 Saskatoon residents were surveyed.

³ Public places identified in this survey include:

- Restaurants/Cafes
- Lounges/Bars/Night Clubs/Pubs
- Bowling Alleys
- Bingo Halls, Pool Halls
- Recreation Facilities e.g. arenas and casinos.

- Less than 1% of respondents reported back that they had been to bingo halls more frequently as a result of being smoke free, 89% reporting that they did not attend bingo halls even before the passage of the law. 3.1% said they attended bingo less often now, giving a net decrease of 2.1%. (See Table 1. below)

Table 1. Question: Since the smoking ban, have you gone to the following establishments more often, less often or about the same? (July 2005 Phone Survey of 1255 randomly selected Saskatoon residents)

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Restaurants and pubs</u>	<u>Bars and nightclubs</u>	<u>Bingos</u>
About the same	70.5%	29.9%	6.8%
I do not attend	5.3%	51.2%	88.8%
More often	15.0%	11.1%	0.9%
Less often	8.6%	7.3%	3.1%
Do not know	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%

Compliance with the No Smoking in Public Places Bylaw

City bars and restaurants in Saskatoon are now smoke-free, compliance rates are high and enforcement issues have been relatively few. Saskatoon Health Region Public Health Services conducted 914 inspections in 2005. Of those establishments inspected 99.8% were compliant with the law – no patrons or workers were smoking, no ashtrays were present, and “No Smoking” signage was properly posted.

Smoking Prevalence

One year prior to the smoking bylaw, the prevalence of smoking in Saskatoon residents was 24.1% (Statistics Canada 2003⁴). One year after the smoking bylaw, the smoking prevalence is 19.4% as measured in the July 2005 Phone Survey of 1255 randomly selected Saskatoon residents which included both smokers and non-smokers.

The absolute reduction in smoking prevalence was 4.7%.

⁴ Canadian Comprehensive Community Health Survey (CCHS) Statistics Canada, 2003

Attitudes of Restaurant / Nightclub Owners (Employers)

Fifty (50) local establishments were picked at random and then surveyed. Only one establishment refused to participate. The opinion of restaurant / nightclub owners on the financial impact of the smoking ban was a very close even split, with 46.3% reporting that they felt that the smoking ban had **no** financial impact, or may have even had a positive impact, versus 46.3% who felt it may have had a negative or a strong negative impact. It is interesting to observe that even amongst those who thought the ban on smoking in all public places may have had a negative impact, 40% of this same group felt that the health gains for workers and patrons were worth any negative impact, and 76% of them do recognize second-hand smoke as a health hazard.

Table 2. Financial Impact of Smoking Ban

About the same overall	29.6%
Strong positive impact	9.3%
Positive impact	7.4%
Negative impact	16.7%
Strong negative impact	29.6%
If answered negative impact or strong negative impact, was the negative financial impact worth health gains for workers and patrons	40% yes

Attitudes of Restaurant / Nightclub Employees

The original goal was to survey 100 employees. Unfortunately, only 65 workers could be found in the 50 establishments chosen at random that worked both before and after the public smoking ban. No staff members refused to participate. Sixty-three percent (63%) of restaurant / nightclub employees felt that the current smoke-free work environment had a positive impact on their health, while only 7.7% of employees thought that the ban may have had a negative impact on their health. Ninety-four percent (94%) of these employees agreed that second-hand smoke was hazardous to their health. Table 3 provides a more detailed breakdown of the results.

Table 3. Impact of Public Smoking Ban on Your Health

About the same overall	29.2%
Strong positive impact	16.9%
Positive impact	46.2%
Negative impact	3.1%
Strong negative impact	4.6%

Economic ImpactLiquor Sales (Source: Planning and Research, Government of Saskatchewan) Dates reviewed July 2003 to June 2004 and July 2004 to June 2005

Alcohol purchases at restaurants, lounges and nightclubs reduced by 3.5% in the first year of the public smoking ban. This finding, however, is confounded by the fact that off sale purchases also reduced by 4.3% in the first year of the smoking ban. We also need to take in to account that the lack of a 2004 NHL season could have also had an adverse impact on bar patronage, and it would be important to compare this finding with the trend over the rest of Canada. Media reports during this period suggested that bar attendance was down across the country during the winter due to the NHL lockout.

Job Losses (Source: Statistics Canada) Dates reviewed July 2003 to June 2004 and July 2004 to June 2005

Recent newspaper reports suggest job losses in the accommodation and food services industry in Saskatchewan as a result of public smoking bans. In the first year of the intervention in Saskatoon, 1400 jobs were lost in this industry. This finding is confounded by the fact, however, that 1300 jobs were lost in this same industry the year previous to the public smoking ban. Other provinces had similar job losses in this industry during the same time period, without changes to their smoking by-laws. Overall, in the last two years, 7200 extra jobs have been created in Saskatoon while overall unemployment rates have fallen.

Health Effects - Acute Myocardial Infarction (Heart Attack)

Comparing July 1996 - June 2000 to July 2000 - June 2004, acute MI admissions/discharges increased by 16%. Comparing July 2000 - June 2004 to July 2004-June 2005, acute MI admissions/discharges reduced by 10%. These results have been submitted to a medical journal for publication. Upon publication, full details of the methodology and results will be publicly available.

Future Legislative Considerations

In a 2006 survey of 1,250 Saskatoon residents, 52% support smoke free patios, 56% support smoke free public places e.g. arenas, 71.3% support smoke-free barriers around public buildings, while 86.1% support smoke-free barriers around schools, as an important addition to other efforts to prevent the first use of tobacco products among young people and 83.8% support smoke-free barriers around health care facilities.

Summary

Overall, it would appear that support for the Saskatoon bylaw remains high and may have increased in the past year, less people are smoking, there are already positive health impacts, and more people report going out to restaurants and bars since the ban than before the ban. Economic impact assessment shows mixed results, since there are many other factors at play as to whether sales go up or down. Short term economic decreases have been reported in other jurisdictions, but recoveries have been quick, and generally reports show that net increases prevail to those establishments that adapt to the new realities. There continues to be public support for inclusion of patios in the bylaw.

In our opinion, the City of Saskatoon bylaw has been a success, is supported by residents, and should remain as is, including outdoor patios, for the good of our citizens and visitors to our City.