



## The Vermont Legislative Research Shop

### **Smoking Ban in Bars**

#### **Background Information**

In recent years there has been an increased amount of attention paid to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS). More commonly known as second hand smoke, ETS has been actively studied and its effects are better known today than ever before. There have been several campaigns in recent years that have spearheaded the fight against ETS. The main argument against allowing people to smoke in public establishments is the detrimental effects that ETS has on workers. Although OSHA regulates air quality standards for employees, there have been no regulations put in place by the Federal government to date that refer to ETS exposure. States and cities are now taking it upon themselves to protect workers and create a cleaner atmosphere in the smokiest public places, most notably bars and cabarets. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Cigarette smoking kills approximately 434,000 people every year in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The EPA estimates that roughly 62,000 of those are non-smokers who die from exposure to ETS.

#### **Health Issues**

Due to the fact that ETS is a known human carcinogen it has become an important issue for several federal agencies who deal with the regulation of occupational and environmental risks. The Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Advisory Board has ranked indoor air pollution as one of the top five environmental risks to public health.<sup>2</sup> Recent studies completed by The University of California/Berkley concluded that levels of ETS in bars were 3.9 to 6.1 times higher than in offices and 4.4 to 4.5 times higher than in residences. The risk of lung cancer may be increased by as much as 50 percent for employees of these industries.<sup>3</sup> Researchers conducted another study based on a random sample of San Francisco bars and taverns, and published their findings in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. The authors of this study found that thirty-nine bartenders (74% of the total sample) initially reported respiratory symptoms prior to the instatement of the ban. Of those symptomatic at the inception of the ban, 23 (59%) no longer

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<sup>1</sup> EPA "Fact sheet: respiratory health effects of passive smoking"  
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/etsfs.html#Summary> visited on 1/26/2004

<sup>2</sup> EPA "Fact sheet: respiratory health effects of passive smoking"  
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/etsfs.html#Summary> visited on 1/26/2004

<sup>3</sup>JAMA "Involuntary smoking in the restaurant workplace. A review of employee exposure and health effects"



Figure 1: Likelihood of bar patronage after ordinance



