

A Guide to the New York State Clean Indoor Air Act

In 2017, New York State expanded Article 13-E of the Public Health Law, also known as the Clean Indoor Air Act (the Act). The Act prohibits smoking and vaping in almost all public and private indoor workplaces, including restaurants and bars, to protect workers and the public from exposure to harmful secondhand tobacco smoke and vaping aerosols. Localities may continue to adopt and enforce local laws regulating smoking and vaping; however, these regulations must be at least as strict as the Act.

Since 2003, the Act has protected millions of New Yorkers from daily exposure to deadly secondhand smoke and the illnesses it causes. The Act saves lives and money. Studies show that in the first year alone, the expansion of the Act resulted in about 3,800 fewer hospital admissions for heart attack, which saved an estimated \$56 million in health care costs.^{1,2}

What is secondhand smoke, and why it harmful?

Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke from burning tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars or pipes and the smoke exhaled by a smoker. Exposure to secondhand smoke is unsafe. Even brief exposure can be harmful. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including about 70 that can cause cancer.³ Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause illness and death in infants, children and adults. It can cause bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections in children and more frequent attacks in children who have asthma.^{3,4}

Secondhand smoke is a cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and in nonsmoking adults, it causes almost 50,000 deaths from heart disease, stroke and lung cancer in the U.S. every year.³