



## Fact Sheet on Smoke-Free Cars and Vehicles

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*Protecting children from exposure to second-hand smoke in cars has become an important issue in Canada.*

### **Some Canadian statistics you should know**

Twenty-five percent of Canadians are exposed to second-hand smoke in a car or vehicle.<sup>1</sup>

### **Why is smoking in cars an issue?**

In cars, smoke is concentrated in a smaller space. As a result, second-hand smoke can reach very high levels. Smoking a single cigarette for only 5 minutes in a vehicle can create a level of second-hand smoke that is similar to a smoky bar.<sup>2</sup>

Opening a window or turning on the fan won't make much difference. The cigarette smoke will often blow back into the car and can linger for hours.<sup>3</sup>

### **What are the harmful effects of smoking in cars and vehicles?**

There is no risk-free level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful to your health.<sup>4</sup>

Exposure to second-hand smoke in vehicles is particularly a problem for babies and children who breathe more quickly and take in more harmful chemicals for their size than adults do.<sup>5</sup>

People who smoke and drive have a higher risk of motor vehicle injury and death.<sup>6</sup>

Cars owned by smokers have a lower resale value because of the smell and cigarette burns to upholstery.

### **There is increasing public support for a ban on smoking in cars and vehicles**

Eight in ten (80%) Ontarians support legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present.<sup>7</sup>

### **New laws are being passed in Canada about smoking in cars and vehicles**

In Canada, Wolfville Nova Scotia was the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt a bylaw to prohibit smoking in vehicles carrying children under 18.<sup>8</sup>

Since then, private members bills or motions have been introduced in Nova Scotia,<sup>9</sup> British Columbia<sup>10</sup> and the Yukon<sup>11</sup> to ban smoking in vehicles with children province-wide.

### **Here are some steps you can take to make your car smoke-free:**

- ✓ Do not smoke in your car or allow others to smoke in your car.
- ✓ Let all passengers know that your car is smoke-free by hanging a sign from the dashboard or on a window.
- ✓ Empty the ashtray and fill it with sugar-free candies, change or potpourri.
- ✓ Give your car interior a good wash and vacuum.

## References

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- <sup>2</sup>Rees VW, Connolly GN. Measuring air quality to protect children from second-hand smoke in cars. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2006;31:363-68. Accessed December 6, 2007 from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&dopt=Citation&list\\_uids=17046406](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&dopt=Citation&list_uids=17046406)
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- <sup>5</sup>Health Canada. (2005). Make Your Home and Car Smoke-free: A Guide to Protecting your Family from Second-hand Smoke. Accessed December 5, 2007 from [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/tobac-tabac/second-guide/index_e.html)
- <sup>6</sup>Young K, Regan M, Hammer M. Driver distraction: a review of the literature. Monash University Accident Research Centre. Report #206. 2003. Accessed December 5, 2007 from <http://www.monash.edu.au/muarc/reports/muarc206.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup>Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network from Nov 26 to Nov 30, 2007. Ipsos Reid News Release. Accessed December 16, 2007 from: <http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release.do?id=800180>
- <sup>8</sup>Patten, M. Town First in Canada to Ban Smoking in Vehicles with Children. *The Globe and Mail*. November 20, 2007. Accessed December 5, 2007 from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20071120.SMOKE20/TPStory/?query=wolfville>.
- <sup>9</sup>Bill No. 6. Smoke Free Places Act (amended) Accessed December 5, 2007 from [http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/bills/60th\\_2nd/1st\\_read/b006.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/legc/bills/60th_2nd/1st_read/b006.htm)
- <sup>10</sup>Bill M-232-2007, Smoke-free Cars Act, 2007. Assessed December 5, 2007 from [http://www.leg.bc.ca/38th3rd/1st\\_read/m232-1.htm](http://www.leg.bc.ca/38th3rd/1st_read/m232-1.htm)
- <sup>11</sup>On Monday, Dec. 10, 2007, Darius Elias (MLA for Vuntut Gwichin in Northern Yukon; Liberal) introduced the following private members motion in the Yukon Legislative Assembly: *THAT this House urges the Yukon Party government to include a section within the forthcoming anti-smoking legislation that prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle occupied by minors.* **Note:** A motion is not a bill. A motion, if passed, would have persuasive value but would not bind the government to introduce legislation to ban smoking in vehicles occupied by minors. (Source: E-mail correspondence from Rob Cunningham, December 11, 2007).