

The Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act went into effect July 21. The guidelines are as follows:

The purpose of this legislation is to guarantee that all people in Arkansas workplaces have a healthy and clean environment in which to work and shop. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of lung cancer, heart disease, bronchitis, asthma and low birth weight babies. Laws that prohibit smoking in public buildings protect the rights of non smokers and workers. Breathing secondhand smoke is a major cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. There is more and more national scientific data that the impact of secondhand smoke is having an even worse impact on public health than had been thought in the past. The typical smoker in the United States is likely to cost his health insurance plan \$1,500 more per year than the typical non smoker.

Arkansas taxpayers simply cannot sustain the growing cost of the Medicaid program and the high cost of private health insurance. In so many ways this growth is fueled by smoking related illness.

The legislation does not single out any one type of business. It is a broad law that would apply to all types of businesses in Arkansas.

The legislation does not change any current Arkansas liability rules or laws.

The legislation will be introduced during a special legislative session. The nature of a special session is that it is shorter, and any bill introduced must be well researched and well constructed to have a chance of passage during the shorter session. This bill has been carefully and realistically written based on similar measures in at least 13 other states.

The legislation would guarantee a safe and clean breathing environment in public places with the exception of the following three narrowly defined areas:

- Hotels may offer 20% of their rooms as smoking rooms.
- A business with two or fewer employees that is not open to the public may allow smoking.
- An eating or drinking establishment that is willing to ban all customers under the age of 21 at all times and only employs people over the age of 21, may allow smoking