

## **Questions & Answers Washington Smoke Free Law (I-901)**

**Q: What is the thinking behind this law?**

**A:** Voters have spoken in favor of smoke-free public spaces and workplaces. This law is the final step in expanding our 1985 Clean Indoor Air Act with a goal of offering consistent health protection to all workers and to the public in Washington State. Its passage means that more than 200,000 people now will be protected while at work from known cancer-causing chemicals in secondhand tobacco smoke.

**Q: When will the law go into effect?**

**A:** The law will go into effect 30 days from passage, **December 8, 2005**, making Washington state the 5<sup>th</sup> state in the nation to have a 100%-smoke-free law.

**Q: Which businesses or organizations does this law apply to?**

**A:** All “public places” and “places of employment” are included under the law, meaning any portion of any building or vehicle used by and open to the public or workers, whether the building is owned in whole or in part by private persons or entities, and whether or not an entry/ membership fee is charged. Tribes are Sovereign Nations, and are exempt from the law.

**Q: What do I have to do to comply with the law?**

**A:** Owners or lessees of all businesses and workplaces are required to post signs prohibiting smoking. Signage must be conspicuous at building entrances and in prominent locations throughout a building. No smoking should be allowed within 25 feet of entrances and exits, including windows that open and ventilation intakes.

**Q: How many signs do I need to post?**

**A:** The law does not specify the number of signs, just that they be prominently displayed both at entrances and inside the business or workplace.

**Q: Who will enforce the law?**

**A:** When violations are reported, the Snohomish Health District will work to ensure compliance with those sections of the law pertaining to requirements for persons in charge of businesses, workplaces and other public places. The Health District will work with city attorneys and the county prosecutor to gain enforcement. Local law enforcement agencies are responsible for enforcement of those sections of the law pertaining to individuals who intentionally violate the law by smoking in prohibited areas.

**Q: How can I request a modification of the 25-foot rule?**

**A:** The law does allow a business owner/operator to seek to rebut the presumption that 25 feet is a reasonable minimum distance from entrances, etc. by making application to the local health department. In Snohomish County, Snohomish Health District is

developing a policy and process to evaluate such requests. Check the health district's information line for updates – the number “goes live” on Nov 18: 425.339.5237.

**Q: What about hotels and motels?**

**A:** In addition to signage at entrances and inside buildings as mentioned above, no less than 75% of sleeping quarters available for rent to guests will be required to be smoke free in hotels and motels.

**Q: Does this law apply to private, members-only clubs?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: Will employee smoking rooms in our workplace still be allowed after 12/8?**

**A:** No.

**Q: Where can I get more information or help?**

**A:** Snohomish Health District will offer an information line by Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>: 425.339.5237. Watch for updated information on the Snohomish Health District web site: [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org) Web sites you might find helpful include the Washington State Department of Health at [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov), and [www.secondhandsmokesyou.com](http://www.secondhandsmokesyou.com)