

FAQ: SMOKE FREE VEHICLES

Why is the Town of Wolfville developing a bylaw?

In the past, municipalities have demonstrated leadership and served as a role model regarding Smoke Free Public Places. If towns such as Wolfville and Berwick had not enacted Smoke Free Public Places, Nova Scotians might not have the benefit of the toughest Smoke Free legislation in Canada. It is our hope that the province will move forward with provincial legislation once again upon seeing the success of municipal bylaws in action.

Isn't common sense enough?

While common sense should be enough to prevent smoking with children present in cars, it is clear that for many adults, this is not the case. According to Statistics Canada data, one in five children under the age of 12 are exposed to second-hand smoke in cars.

Does the bylaw violate smokers' rights?

This is not a violation of smokers' rights. The bylaw will protect children from being exposed to tobacco smoke in cars just as car seats protect children from injury in cars.

Who is going to enforce a bylaw?

The Town of Wolfville will develop procedures for enforcement of the bylaw.

Will the bylaw burden the court system?

This bylaw will not clog up the court any more than other bylaws enforced to protect the health and safety of children. As with most bylaws, once the new legislation has been in place, compliance becomes the norm.

Where else do they have similar bylaws?

Similar legislation and bylaws have been implemented in several states in the United States and abroad — Arkansas, Louisiana, New Jersey, Bangor Maine and Puerto Rico. Fourteen additional legislations in the US have recently introduced bills to ban smoking in vehicles with children present. In Canada, Ontario has made similar recommendations for legislation.

Is it enough to open the vehicle window?

Research has shown that there is no level of ventilation that will eliminate the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Opening a car window can result in air flow to the back of the car which may cause smoke to be blown directly at those in the back seat.

What are some other benefits?

The evidence is clear, legislation supports smokers quit attempts. The fewer places there are to smoke, the less you are likely to light up. Other benefits include- a cleaner, fresher smelling vehicle, the resale value of your vehicle can increase, you will be a healthier role model for your children, you will be less distracted while driving and will lower your chances of traffic violations and collisions, you will not have to empty the ashtray in your car any more, and there will be no cigarette burns on your car upholstery. In addition, there are positive health benefits to all adults in the car including smokers and non-smokers.

What will the penalty be?

Education and awareness will be an important piece of this bylaw, however, there will be a \$\$\$\$ penalty for violations.

Why 18?

Children and youth do not have as much control over their environments as adults do. Babies and young children can neither communicate their concerns about their surroundings, nor do they understand the impact and health risks of breathing second hand smoke. Older children and youth may feel uncomfortable about speaking up or have trouble getting away from the smoke. A bylaw will remove this problem.

How supportive are people of a bylaw?

Public support banning smoking in motor vehicles carrying children has increased significantly over the past decade. A recent study found an increase in level of support from 68% in 2002 to 78% in 2005 among smokers and nonsmokers.

What are some of the health risks of second hand smoke for children?

Breathing tobacco smoke increases the likelihood of childhood ear infections, asthma attacks and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. There is emerging evidence that exposure to second hand smoke can negatively impact behavior, attention and cognition. Second hand smoke increases the risk of cancers such as lung and cervical cancer as well as heart disease in adults.

If I smoke in my car before children enter my vehicle, will that affect my children's health?

The intention of this bylaw is to protect children and youth from the harmful effects of second hand smoke. What many parents do not realize is that second hand smoke lingers long after the fact.

Would a Smoke Free Homes Bylaw be next?

There have recently been local and provincial campaigns that have focused on the importance and impact a smoke free home can have on the health and well being of all its inhabitants. It is the intention to continue to promote the benefits and importance of smoke free homes on a local and provincial level through education and public awareness.

How can we promote this in other communities?

We can share our experiences and success!! Our leadership in the Town of Wolfville will be an inspiration to other communities to follow our lead!!

Support the Town of Wolfville's Smoke Free Vehicle Bylaw. Contact your local councillor today!!!

For additional information please visit <http://www.smokefreekings.org>