



# SMOKEFREE CASINOS

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## Smokefree Gaming Laws Across the U.S.

With state regulated and tribal gaming expanding at an exponential rate, casinos and other gaming venues are emerging as huge employers for local and state economies. Nationwide, casinos provide over one million jobs. Many of these workers currently work in dangerous environments.

“Casino workers deserve a safe place to work, just like everyone else,” said Cynthia Hallett, Executive Director of Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights.

While there was once a myth that smoking and

gambling go hand in hand, studies show that only 20% of casino patrons smoke. The evidence speaks for itself. With the vast majority of casino patrons preferring smokefree air, public support for smokefree gaming laws is at an all-time high.

- Smokefree laws do not harm casinos or other gambling venues, just as they have not harmed sales in smokefree restaurants, bars, or bingo parlors.
- Casino workers are at greater risk for lung and heart disease because of secondhand smoke exposure. To avoid legal battles and to protect employee and patron health, more casinos are considering going 100% smokefree.
- Casino workers and customers, even those in a "well-ventilated" casino, are at risk. These workers have cotinine (metabolized nicotine) levels 300-600% higher than in other smoking workplaces.
- The public overwhelmingly supports smokefree casinos (over 70% in polls nationwide).
- See Map of Smokefree Gaming Laws on page 3.

**4 OUT OF 5 CASINO PATRONS DO NOT SMOKE.**

Pritsos, C.A., "The percentage of gamblers who smoke: a study of Nevada casinos and other gaming venues," Reno, NV: University of Nevada, Department of Nutrition, 2006.

## Casino Workers Face Greater Health Risks

Bar and gaming employees are at 50% greater risk of developing heart disease and cancers because of their exposure at work. Like flight attendants 20 years ago, bar workers and card dealers in casinos do their job in a contained environment where they stay in a small area for many hours exposed to secondhand smoke, a known toxin.

Can ventilation help? No. **Ventilation systems may improve odor but do not remove the serious health risks caused by secondhand smoke exposure.** The only way to protect worker and patron health is to provide a 100% smokefree environment. Even in

casinos with ventilation systems, casino employees have far higher levels of cotinine (metabolized nicotine) than do employees in other smoke-filled workplaces.

“I have worked at casinos for over two decades where smoking is still allowed. I am devastated just thinking about how that has impacted my health.” said Jennifer (Last name withheld) of Atlantic City, New Jersey. “And in these tough economic times, I feel like I have to decide between sacrificing my health or getting my paycheck. It’s just not fair.”

Jennifer awaits her fate as a campaign for smokefree casinos in Atlantic City wages on.

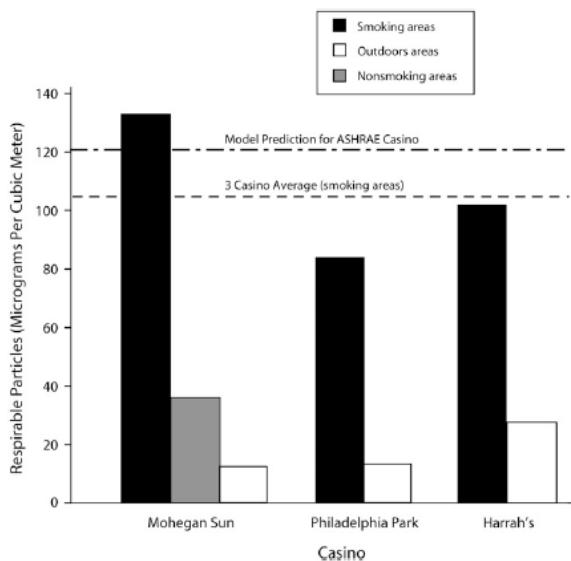
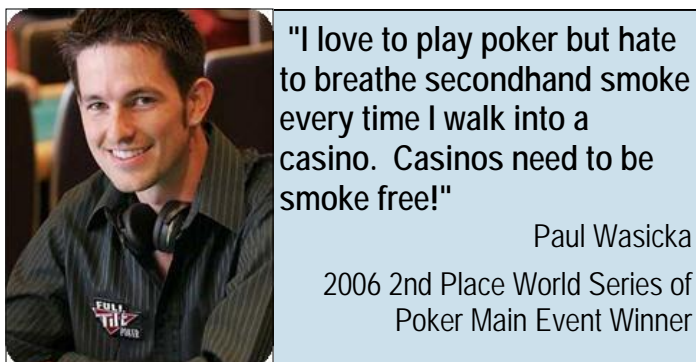
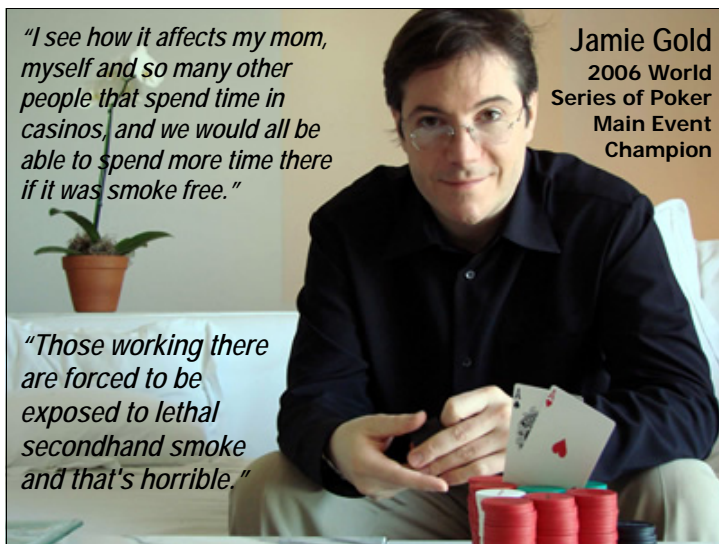
don't gamble with **secondhand smoke**

**No one should have to choose between their job and their health.**

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**SUPPORT SMOKEFREE GAMING**  
visit [www.SmokeFreeCasinos.org](http://www.SmokeFreeCasinos.org)

# Professional Gamblers Want Smokefree Casinos



Note. Measurements were taken on August 15 at the Mohegan Sun (late Wednesday morning) and Philadelphia Park (mid-afternoon Wednesday), and on August 31 at Harrah's (Friday evening).

**FIGURE 1—Measured indoor and outdoor levels of respirable suspended particles (RSPs) at the Mohegan Sun, Philadelphia Park, and Harrah's casinos: Pennsylvania, 2007.**

## Smoke Levels Dangerous in Casinos

Air quality tests inside casinos nationwide indicate dangerous levels of secondhand smoke.

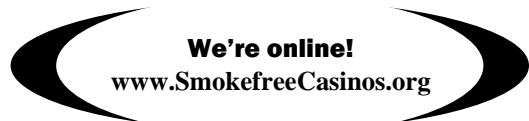
Recent measurements taken in Pennsylvania indicate levels of secondhand smoke are dangerous, even within "non-smoking" areas of casinos.

The report, "Secondhand Smoke in Pennsylvania Casinos: A Study of Nonsmokers' Exposure, Dose, and Risk," (Repace, J., *American Journal of Public Health*,

August 2009) concluded that expensive ventilation technology does not go far enough to solve the problem.

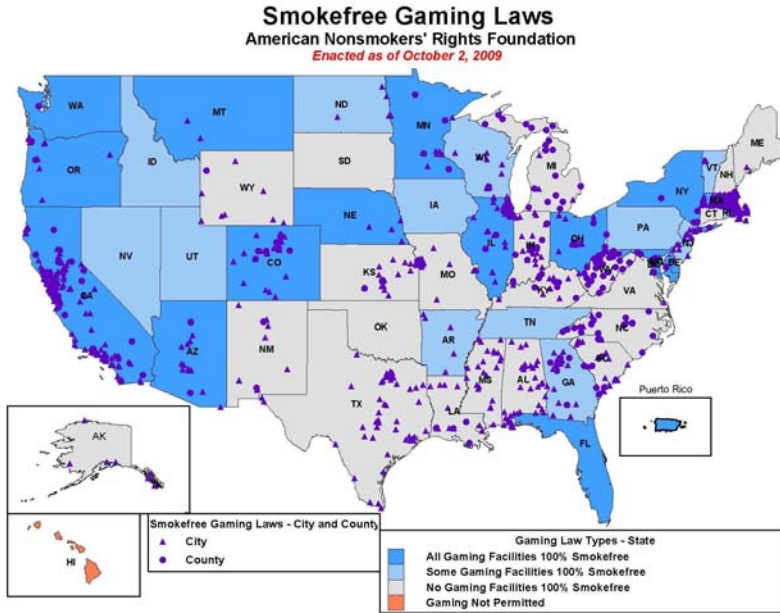
The report estimates that **six per every 10,000 non-smoking casino workers in Pennsylvania will die each year due to secondhand smoke exposure in casinos.** To put this number in perspective, the rate of mining worker deaths in Pennsylvania is 1.2 deaths per year per 10,000 workers.

# Smokefree Gaming Across the U.S.



**27** states plus **Washington DC and Puerto Rico** have enacted 100% smokefree gaming laws. With the recent release of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Report (see below), a large number of communities and states are slated to consider legislation for 100% smokefree casinos in the coming years.

Some Indian Nations are also considering smokefree gaming laws on Tribal Lands.



## NIOSH Report Sends Shockwave Through Gaming Industry

A new federal report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) shows workers in Las Vegas casinos were exposed to dangerous levels of secondhand smoke at work.

In 2005, several casino workers in Las Vegas stepped forward and filed a NIOSH workplace health hazard evaluation request due to exposure to secondhand smoke.

Additional casino workers joined onto the complaint. NIOSH responded with a team that conducted indoor air quality assessments and biomarker tests on 124 workers in Bally's, Caesars Palace, and Paris casinos.

Results from the report indicate dangerous level of secondhand smoke exposure

present at all casinos tested, regardless of ventilation systems. Toxins from secondhand smoke were found absorbed into workers' bodies at growing levels during their shifts.

Authors reported the only way to protect the health of casino workers was a 100% smokefree workplace environment. The report also confirmed that ventilation systems cannot remove health risks.

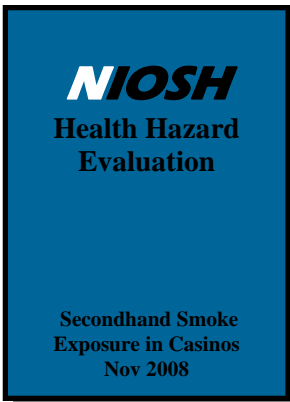
*"We knew we were being exposed to dangerous levels of secondhand smoke, so we filed the request with NIOSH. We just didn't know how worried we should be. Now that I know, I'm horrified,"* said Terri Price of Las Vegas, a casino worker who filed the original complaint in 2005.

"We were working day in and day out, breathing in toxins all day and night without knowing the extent of the danger. No one should have to work like that."

Ms. Price is not alone. The results from the NIOSH report are sending a shockwave through the casino industry, with workers growing more concerned about their health.

Annie Tegen, Chair of the Smokefree Casinos Taskforce said, "Casino workers deserve the right to a healthy safe workplace, free from toxic secondhand smoke. With the release of this report, we expect to see a rise in litigation as more workers become aware of their working conditions. Before that happens, we hope to see casinos going smokefree proactively throughout the country."

To access the full study: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe)



*"This report is an urgent call to action. Exposure levels in casinos are extremely dangerous and cannot be ignored."*

Cynthia Hallett, MPH  
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

It's a Great Job,  
But Not Worth Dying For



No one should have to  
choose between their job  
and their health.

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## Heart Attacks: Casino Customers & Workers Face High Risk

In a landmark report issued on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 and covered by hundreds of news media outlets across the country, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) concluded heart attack rates are reduced dramatically (ranging from 6% to 47%) when smokefree laws are in place.

The phenomenon was first noticed several years ago when Helena, Montana, went smoke free by law and heart attack rates in the next few months dropped by 40 percent, then went back up after the law was repealed.

Since then, similar studies have researched the connection between smokefree laws and heart-attack reduction. Based on a comprehensive review of these results, the IOM concluded there is a direct cause and effect relationship between smokefree laws (smokefree workplaces and public places) and reduced heart attack rates.

This new information should be of particular concern to casino workers and customers who are exposed to extremely high levels of toxic secondhand smoke.

The IOM report confirms that secondhand smoke exposure leads to increased heart attacks. In fact, even short term exposure (a few hours spent in a smoke-filled casino) can increase risk for heart attack. Therefore, both casino workers and customers are in danger when they enter a casino.

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## The Facts:

Smoke-filled casinos have up to **50 times more cancer-causing particles** in the air than highways and city streets clogged with diesel trucks in rush hour traffic. After going smokefree, indoor air pollution virtually disappears from these environments.

**Ventilation does not solve the problem.** Casino workers even in a "well-ventilated" casino have cotinine (metabolized nicotine) levels 300-600% higher than employees in other smoking workplaces during a work shift.

Making casinos **100% smokefree** is the only way to completely protect both customers and workers from the dangers of secondhand smoke.



*For References, visit [www.smokefreecasinos.org](http://www.smokefreecasinos.org).*

American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation  
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This publication was produced in partnership with the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation (ANRF), an educational nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, which educates people about the benefits of smokefree air, and the right to breathe smokefree air. ANRF provides educational resources for schools, health departments, medical organizations, and others interested in the issues surrounding smoking and secondhand smoke and the benefits of smokefree environments.

