

### **State Smokefree Air Laws**

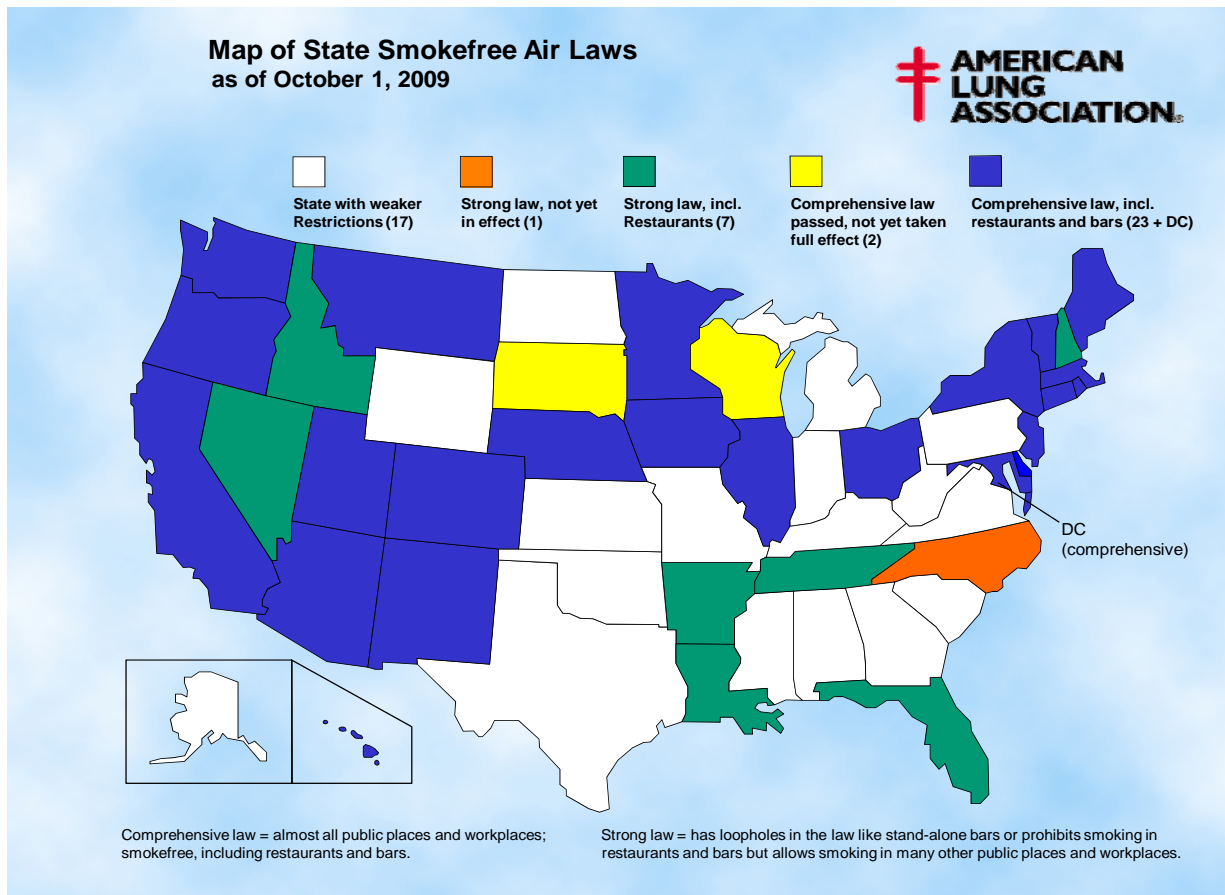
Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard, causing or worsening a wide range of adverse health effects, including lung cancer, respiratory infections, and asthma. A growing number of states have moved to protect their citizens from this threat by passing laws that prohibit smoking in almost all public places and workplaces, including restaurants and bars. As of October 1, 2009, 25 states and the District of Columbia have approved such laws; the laws have taken full effect in 23 of these states and the District of Columbia. See the map below to see which states these are.

#### **Action/Key Facts on Smokefree Air Laws:**

- In 2009, South Dakota and Wisconsin have strengthened their existing laws to prohibit smoking in almost all public places and workplaces, including restaurants, bars and gaming establishments.
- North Carolina has passed a law in 2009 prohibiting smoking in restaurants and bars, and partially repealing language in the current law that prevents local communities from passing stronger laws.
- The American Lung Association issued its *Smokefree Air Challenge* in 2006 calling on all states to pass comprehensive smokefree laws as soon as possible. For more information go to: [www.lungusa.org/smokefree](http://www.lungusa.org/smokefree).

#### **Smokefree Air Laws Protect Public Health:**

- The landmark 2006 Surgeon General's report, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke* found that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and the only way to fully protect people is to prohibit smoking indoors entirely.<sup>1</sup>
- Exposure to secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,400 lung cancer deaths and 46,000 heart disease deaths among nonsmokers every year.<sup>2</sup>
- In May 2007, the World Health Organization issued new policy recommendations calling for completely 100 percent smokefree public places and workplaces worldwide.<sup>3</sup>
- The National Cancer Institute found that being employed in a workplace where smoking is prohibited is associated with a reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked per day and an increase in the success rate of smokers who are attempting to quit.<sup>4</sup>



For more information on state smokefree air laws and policies, check out the American Lung Association's Tobacco Policy Project/State Legislated Actions on Tobacco Issues (SLATI) website at <http://slati.lungusa.org>.

Last updated: October 1, 2009; updated as information changes or quarterly.

<sup>1</sup> The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: Secondhand Smoke Exposure in the Workplace. A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> California Environmental Protection Agency. Health Effects of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke, June 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The full World Health Organization policy recommendations on secondhand smoke are available at: [http://www.who.int/tobacco/resources/publications/wntd/2007/pol\\_recommendations/en/index/html](http://www.who.int/tobacco/resources/publications/wntd/2007/pol_recommendations/en/index/html).

<sup>4</sup> National Cancer Institute. *Population Based Smoking Cessation: Proceedings of a Conference on What Works to Influence Cessation in the General Population, Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph 12*. NIH Pub. 00-4892, Nov. 2000.