



To Protect and Promote the Health and the Environment of the People of Kittitas County

Smoking in Public Places Q & A

In 2005, the "Smoking in Public Places" law (RCW 70.160) went into effect. Exposure to secondhand smoke is known to cause cancer in humans as well as other diseases including pneumonia, asthma, and heart disease. Exposure to secondhand smoke in the work place likely develops into potentially fatal diseases. In order to protect the health of citizens, including workers in their employment, it is necessary to prohibit smoking in public places.

1. Why is the Kittitas County Public Health Department enforcing this law?

The Smoking in Public Places law was initially passed in 2005 by Washington state voters. During that time, most businesses have been in compliance with the law on their own. However, there are still some businesses that are not in compliance with the law and local public health departments are responsible for enforcing both the state law and local ordinances related to smoking in public places.

2. If customers smoke within 25 feet of my establishment, will I be fined \$500 dollars?

In some instances, it is not possible to get 25 feet away from entrances or exits downtown, because an individual would be in the street. Individuals should make every effort to smoke as far away as possible from building entrances, exits, opening windows, and ventilation intakes. It is not the intent of the state law, county ordinance, or public health department enforcement policy to police the sidewalks. The intent is to fine establishments who are blatantly violating the law by allowing smoking in their establishment.

3. If I allow someone to smoke in my establishment, will I be fined \$500 dollars?

If you allow smoking in your establishment and a Kittitas County Public Health employee witnesses the violation, then the business owner will receive a \$500 dollar fine.

4. If an individual enters my business smoking, will I be fined \$500 dollars?

No. If an individual enters your business while smoking, you should ask them to leave and to extinguish the cigar or cigarette. If the individual refuses to leave, then it is another matter beyond Smoking in Public Places.

5. Is an alley considered a public place?

No, an alley is not considered a public place under the Smoking in Public Places law. "Public place" means that any portion of a building or vehicle used by and open to the public and includes a reasonable distance, as set forth in RCW [70.160.075](#), of twenty-five feet from entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes that serve an enclosed area where smoking is prohibited. The intention behind the Smoking in Public Places law is to protect employees in businesses, whether they serve the public or private members.

