



For Immediate Release:

December 27, 2007

SB 7: “Smoke-Free Cars with Minors” Fact Sheet

Law Summary:

Effective January 1, 2008, H&S Code §118947 bans the smoking of any cigarette, pipe or cigar in any moving or parked vehicle while a youth younger than the age of 18 is present. Smokers can be fined up to \$100.00 for smoking in vehicles when minors are present. Law enforcement officers, including the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, and city police departments will be responsible for enforcing the law. Violations are categorized as secondary offences, meaning law enforcement officials may not stop a vehicle for a smoking violation alone, but may include the infraction with other citations.

Purpose of the Law:

As a result of this law, children in cars will breathe less secondhand smoke. It may also help reduce cigarette litter on streets and highways, reduce roadside fires, and help smokers to quit.

Children are especially at risk to the harmful health effects caused by breathing secondhand smoke in confined spaces, such as a car or truck. Secondhand smoke is a known cause for bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia and ear infections in children.

The level of toxic air in a vehicle when someone is smoking is up to ten times greater than the level which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers hazardous. Harmful chemicals in secondhand smoke can remain in the air and on surfaces in a car or truck for many hours, and even days, after a cigarette has been smoked.

Facts about Secondhand Smoke:

In the 2005 California Tobacco Survey, 92.3% of California adults agreed that smoking should not be allowed inside cars when children are in them.

Secondhand smoke is classified by the EPA as a Group A carcinogen; this group also includes arsenic and asbestos.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) identified secondhand smoke as a toxic air contaminant in January 2006.

The 2006 Surgeon General’s Report states that secondhand smoke causes disease in children. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and developing asthma. The Report also states that scientific evidence about the dangers of secondhand smoke is indisputable: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

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