



SMOKE IN CARS

Senate Bill 7 – Smoke-free Cars with Minors Law

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TUOLUMNE COUNTY YOUTH NOW PROTECTED FROM TOXIC SECONDHAND SMOKE IN CARS

New State Law Prohibits Smoking in Cars with Youth Under 18 Years Old

On January 1, California's new "Smoke-free Cars with Minors" law took effect which prohibits smoking in cars when youth under 18 years old are present, giving California the most comprehensive smoke-free car law in the nation. The law was passed to protect children in response to growing scientific evidence that smoking in cars exposes passengers to high levels of toxic secondhand smoke.

According to the 2006 Surgeon General's Report, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. A team of environmental scientists from Stanford University also published a recent study showing that peak levels of secondhand smoke from smoking in a car can be up to 10 times greater than the level which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers hazardous.

"The science is indisputable that smoking in cars poses serious health risks," said Todd Stolp, MD, County Health Officer. "I urge every resident of Tuolumne County to support this important public health law and protect our children."

Evidence shows that children are especially vulnerable to the health effects caused by secondhand smoke. According to the EPA, secondhand smoke causes 31,000 asthma attacks in children each year. Secondhand smoke is also a known cause of bronchitis, pneumonia and ear infections in children.

"For the past two decades, those of us living in Tuolumne County, and all of California have benefited from public health laws that protect our communities from tobacco and secondhand smoke," said Todd Stolp, MD, County Health Officer. "This new law



protecting youth from secondhand smoke in cars is an important and logical extension of that protection.”

Effective January 1, 2008, the “Smoke-free Cars with Minors” law prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle, regardless of whether the vehicle is stationary or moving, in which a minor (under 18 years old) is present. A violation is punishable by a fine of up to \$100 and categorized as a secondary offense, meaning an officer may not pull over a vehicle for the sole purpose of checking if the driver is smoking with a minor present.

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