

# CREATING SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS



## Smoking kills.

Tobacco use kills more than **7.1 million people** every year. Smokers lose **10 to 11 years** earlier than non-smokers.



2 out of 3 smokers will die from smoking.



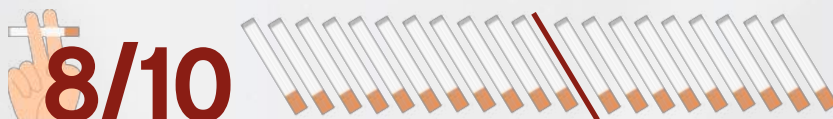
Almost 1 out of 7 people die from the ill effects of secondhand smoke.



## The Philippines has among the highest number of smokers in Southeast Asia.

1 out of 4 (16.5 million) Filipino adults use tobacco and 15.9 million of which are smokers.

8 out of 10 smokers smoke daily and use an average of 11 cigarettes while heavy smokers use more than 20 cigarettes **everyday**.



The average monthly cigarette expenditure is around PHP 678.4 pesos.



## The Philippines is ranked fifth in Southeast Asia for the highest number of youth smokers.

16% of Filipino students aged 13 to 15 are smokers.

14.5% of Filipino grade school students are smokers.

11.7% of Filipino students have tried vaping or smoking e-cigarettes.



8 out of 10 Filipino school-aged smokers purchase cigarettes from a store, shop, street vendor, or kiosk due to single-stick sales.

Fact Sheet on  
Smoke-free  
Environments

February 2021



# Smoking and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to offer scientific and comprehensive tobacco cessation programs for smokers and tobacco users and to improve tobacco control policies in the Philippines.

- **Smokers are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19** due to their **weakened lungs and limited responsiveness and immunity** to infections.
- **25%** of patients who were hospitalized for severe cases of COVID-19, admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU), relied on a mechanical ventilator, or have died from COVID-19 were all **current smokers** while **5%** were **former smokers**.
- The physical act of smoking such as **removing masks** in public places and the **hand-to-mouth movement increases the risk of virus transmission**.
- **Vaping or smoking e-cigarettes** may risk spreading the COVID-19 virus through aerosols and **possibly infect non-smokers**.

## Tobacco Control Laws in the Philippines

The Philippines is bound to the provisions of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and is obligated to comply with its standards and to align tobacco control laws and policies with the FCTC.

- Republic Act (RA) No. 8749 or the Clean Air Act of 1999 **prohibited smoking inside public buildings, enclosed public spaces, and public vehicles**.
- RA No. 9211 or the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003 **defined restrictions on tobacco sales in schools and banned tobacco advertisements** on television, radio, and mass media. It also **prohibits smoking in schools, elevators, gasoline stations, healthcare facilities, public transportation, and food preparation areas**. RA 9211 established the Inter-agency Committee-Tobacco (IAC-T).
- RA No. 9711 or the Food and Drug Administration Act of 2009 provided **regulation for products like e-cigarettes**.
- RA No. 10351 or the Sin Tax Reform Act of 2012 increased excise **taxes for tobacco products**, allotted revenues for health facilities, Universal Healthcare, and funding for tobacco farmers seeking alternative livelihoods.
- RA No. 10643 or the Graphic Health Warning Act of 2014 required all tobacco products to **feature graphic health warning labels** about the destructive health effects of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.
- RA 11346 of 2019 **raised the excise tax on cigarettes** by PHP 45 per pack with an incremental increase of P5 per year for four years, eventually reaching a total of PHP 60 by 2023 where 50% of tax is for health care.
- RA 11467 of 2020 **introduced regulatory provisions** such as **raising the excise tax on e-liquids** for ENDS/ENNDS products, **increasing the age of access** to 21 years old, **assigning the regulation** of such products to the FDA, and **banning any other flavors aside from tobacco and menthol**.
- Executive Order (EO) No. 26 in 2017 or the National Smoking Ban **prohibited smoking in enclosed public spaces** and the **sale of cigarettes within 100 meters from a school**.
- EO 106 in 2020 provided updates to EO 26 by **banning the manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes to minors**.
- Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order (AO) 2020-055 provided the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with the **framework regarding the regulation of heated tobacco products (HTPs) and ENDS/ENNDS**.

# The Importance of Smoke-Free Environments

Tobacco and the illnesses that it causes place a heavy burden on the healthcare system especially during the pandemic of COVID-19.

- There is **no “safe level” of exposure** to secondhand smoke.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke among adults and causes asthma and other respiratory ailments among children.
- 21.5% of Filipino adults who work indoors (3.6 million) are exposed to secondhand smoke at the workplace, 11.6% (8.1 million) are exposed in restaurants, 37.6% (20.2 million) on public transportation, and 34.7% (24 million) at home.
- 54.2% of Filipinos aged 13 to 15 are exposed to secondhand smoke in enclosed public places while 38.3% are exposed at home.
- **700 million children** are exposed to secondhand smoke globally.

## Our calls towards 100% smoke-free environments



### Prohibit smoking in all public places and workplaces

Public places should expand to **all stationary or mobile places** which can be accessed or used by people. These places include public transportation, terminals, markets, parks, resorts, walkways/sidewalks, entrance ways, and waiting areas.



### Prohibit indoor designated smoking areas

All designated smoking areas should be in an **open, outdoor area** without any roofs or walls, be limited to **10 square meters**, and be **more than 10 meters away** from entrances, exits, or areas where people pass through or congregate.



### Establish a Smoke-Free Task Force

With funding from the local government, the **Smoke-Free Task Force** shall be established in all provinces, cities, and municipalities. It is responsible for **implementing, enforcing, and monitoring smoking laws** for ensuring a smoke-free environment in the local community.

## Other Critical Areas for Reform

PLCPD calls for the protection of the health of Filipinos above all, and first and foremost, the protection of children and youth from the ills of tobacco. Critical points for reform in the Tobacco Regulation Act include the following:

- **Remove the representation** of the tobacco industry in the IAC-T
- **Raise the minimum age** of sale and use of cigarettes to 25 years old
- **Require plain packaging** for tobacco products
- **Prohibit single-stick sale**
- **Remove tobacco advertisements** at point of sale and ban all forms of tobacco advertisements, promotions, and sponsorships
- **Ensure 100% vape-free places** and ban vape flavors

# References:

American Cancer Society. Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Causes, Risk Factors, and Prevention (May 16, 2016), <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8704.00.pdf>.

Banks E, Joshy G, Weber MF, et al. Tobacco smoking and all-cause mortality in a large Australian cohort study: findings from a mature epidemic with current low smoking prevalence. *BMC Medicine* 2015;13:38.

Bellinger, D. Drug Vaping: From the Dangers of Misuse to New Therapeutic Devices. *Toxics* 2016;4:29.

Department of Health (DOH). Global Adult Tobacco Survey: Country Report 2015. Manila: DOH, 2017.

DOH, WHO, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Global Youth Tobacco Survey Fact Sheet: Philippines 2015. Manila: DOH, 2016.

DOH. DOH, PPS: A smoke-free Philippines lessens COVID-19 risk, tobacco use weakens lungs and immune system (December 8, 2020) <https://doh.gov.ph/press-release/DOH-PPS-A-SMOKE-FREE-PHILIPPINES-LESSENS-COVID-19-RISK-TOBACCO-USE-WEAKENS-LUNGS-AND-IMMUNE-SYSTEM>

DOH, WHO, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, et al. 2009 Philippines' Global Adult Tobacco Survey Country Report. Manila: DOH (2010).

Drope J, Schluger NW, eds. Tobacco Atlas, 6th ed. Atlanta, Georgia: American Cancer Society, 2018.

GBD 2015 Risk Factors Collaborators. Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 79 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990-2015: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2015. *Lancet*. 2016;388:1659-1724.

GBD 2017 Risk Factor Collaborators. Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 84 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks for 195 countries and territories, 1990-2017: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *Lancet* 2018;392:1923-1994.

Goodchild M, Nargis N, Tursan d'Espaignet E. Global economic cost of smoking-attributable diseases. *Tobacco Control* 2018;27:58-64.

The Union. COVID-19 and Tobacco: The Union Monthly Brief Issue 8 (December 2020). <https://theunion.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/The%20Union%27s%20Master%20Brief%20COVID-19%20and%20Smoking%2021%20Dec.pdf>

The Union. COVID-19 and Smoking: Frequently Asked Questions. <https://theunion.org/our-work/covid-19/covid-19-and-smoking-frequently-asked-questions>

Wei Jie Guan, et al. Clinical Characteristics of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in China. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2020; 382:1708-1720.

World Health Organization (WHO). WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of Parties. Guidelines on Protection from Exposure to Secondhand Smoke. Conference of Parties decision FCTC/COP2(7) (July 2007).

WHO. Smoking and COVID-19 (June 30, 2020), <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/smoking-and-covid-19>

WHO. Tobacco: Key facts (March 9, 2018), <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>.

Zafeiridou M, Hopkinson NS, Voulvoulis N. Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's Global Environmental Footprint Across Its Entire Supply Chain. *Environ Sci Technol* 2018;52:8087-8094.