

Protecting Children from Secondhand Smoke

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Secondhand Smoke is Harmful to Health

- It contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds, of which at least 43 are known carcinogens.
- Secondhand tobacco smoke is in the same category as the most toxic automotive and industrial air pollutants, according to the California EPA.

According to the Surgeon General's most recent report, "The health effects of secondhand smoke exposure are more pervasive than we previously thought. The scientific evidence is now indisputable: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance. It is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and nonsmoking adults... We know that secondhand smoke harms people's health, but many people assume that exposure to secondhand smoke in small doses does not do any significant damage to one's health. However, science has proven that there is NO risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. **Let me say that again: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke**" ~ *Surgeon General Carmona, June 27, 2006.*

What are Other Places Doing?

In recognition that children are particularly vulnerable to the harms of secondhand smoke due to their developmental stage and that children can not control their environment, several states have passed or are examining legislation that prohibits smoking when a child or minor is present. Arkansas, Louisiana, California, and Maine have already enacted laws, and Nebraska is also considering a similar law.

- Arkansas prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle carrying a child under age six, who weighs less than 60 pounds, and who is in a car seat (effective 7/21/2006)
- Louisiana prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle carrying a child under age 13 (effective 08/15/2006)
- California prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle when a minor (17 years old and under) is present
- Maine prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle when a child under age 16 is present (effective 09/01/2008)

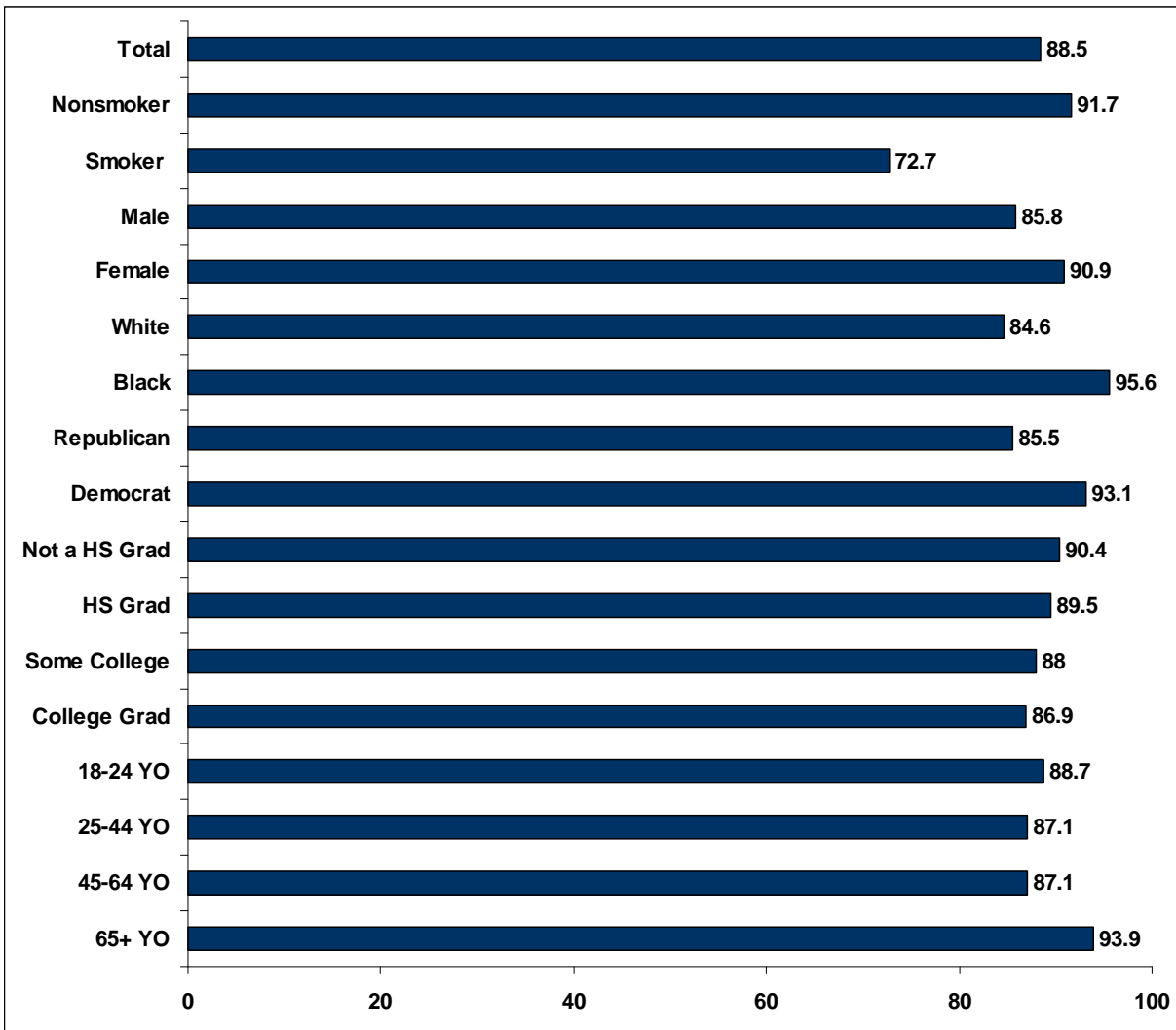
Although these laws move beyond smoking bans in public places such as restaurants and bars and into privately owned cars, there are currently numerous laws restricting what a person can do while driving a motor vehicle on public property. Moreover, children are a captive audience while riding in their parent's vehicle.

Strong Public Support for Smoke-Free Legislation

The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control, administered by the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University, demonstrated that:

- **88.5%** of Mississippi adults believe that people should not be allowed to smoke in cars when children are present, while
- **72.7%** of Mississippi smokers also hold this belief.
- **85.5%** of Republicans and **93.1%** of Democrats support legislation that would prohibit people from smoking in motor vehicles when children are present.

Percent of people who believe that you should not be allowed to smoke while driving an automobile when children are present



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