TOBACCO SMOKING IN
THE WORKPLACE**


Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) is a national, nonprofit, scientific and educational organization concerned with the problems of smoking and the rights of the nonsmoker. This pamphlet describes the focus of ASH which is not to promote a total ban on smoking in the workplace but to provide a comfortable and safe place for the nonsmoker. Statistics on nonsmokers and programs that limit smoking are briefly noted, with additional documentation available directly from ASH. An appended discussion, "Proposals to curb employee smoking," gives eleven rules for limiting smoking in the workplace. Also attached is an annotated list of 44 companies which limit employee smoking.


In 1978, the author queried 128 large Massachusetts employers regarding their smoking policies and/or administration of smoking cessation programs. Eighty-four responded. Fifty-four of the respondents had designated jobs or work areas in which smoking was prohibited usually because of potential danger to products or equipment. Seven of the employers provided counseling, and ten companies provided smoking cessation programs for employees who desired to quit smoking.


Blackburn stresses that the legal aspects of smoking in the workplace must not be slighted. He asserts that not only may smoking be unhealthy, inefficient, and costly to businesses, but that there may also be a legal duty, enforceable by employees, to prohibit or restrict smoking under certain circumstances. Legal decisions on both sides of the smoking question are cited, and Mr. Blackburn concludes by calling for the legislatures to enact specific smoking Acts, since currently the issue of whether an employee has an enforceable right under the law to a smoke-free environment has no certain resolution.

* Prepared by Kevin Barry, Librarian, Industrial Relations Section.
** Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.

This article details the workplace ban on smoking in effect worldwide for the Johns-Manville Corporation. Because research suggested a dramatically increased danger of lung cancer for workers in asbestos-using companies in the U.S., Johns-Manville set out in 1976 to ban smoking in two plants. The program has since been expanded to all the company's plants, with some union resistance. However, the ban has been largely successful. An appended paper, "How other companies are tackling the smoking issue," highlights several companies' experiences with providing separate smoking and nonsmoking areas for employees or customers.


Financial incentives are being used in a growing number of U.S. and Canadian companies to motivate workers to stop smoking. Bonuses, paid smoker cessation programs, and programs which deal in penalties rather than rewards are noted as they have been used in specific companies.


The growing interest of the business community in providing anti-smoking programs for employees is discussed. Danaher reports on a number of promising directions that involve aversive smoking approaches combined with self-control strategies. He adds that businesses tend to show greater interest in the use of consultants or proprietary programs to encourage nonsmoking than use of physician counseling. His recommendations for business smoking cessation programs include: implementation of a variety of anti-smoking strategies; expanded emphasis on behavioral skills training in addition to incentive programs for smoking control; improved research methodologies; improved recruitment procedures to involve as many employees as possible at a reasonable cost; and improved communication systems. Major trends on the modification of smoking behavior are reviewed, and specific examples of smoking control programs in the business setting are presented.


Two Canadian nonsmoking groups are reported as beginning major anti-smoking campaigns in the workplace in both the public and private sectors. The main targets of the campaign are high-density, white-collar offices. Costs of smoking on the job are given as a prime motivation for employees to participate in the program, while the Canadian tobacco industry is cited as a powerful opponent of anti-smoking programs.
Kellihier, E. V. “Fewer workers now are singing ‘Smoke gets in your eyes.’” *Wall Street Journal* (W.S.J. 200 Burnett Road, Chicopee, MA 010121), November 7, 1978. pp. 1, 41. $0.50.

Kellihier reports that firms are increasingly using bonuses and clinics to get employees to quit smoking. She notes that up to 30% of businesses now have some sort of no-smoking policy. These companies are limiting and banning smoking in response to evidence that absences, disability, retirement, and premature deaths due to smoking-related illnesses are costing employers millions of dollars per year.


The authors charge that many in labor, business, government, and the medical community have failed to recognize the critical impact smoking has on occupational health. They theorize that smoking is still regarded as a matter of personal choice rather than the occupational hazard much research indicates that it is.


The effects of cigarette smoking on the health problems and needs of women, particularly working women, are investigated. Studies are cited that deal with tobacco-related diseases and cancer, the influence of smoking on the incidence of birth defects and pregnancy complications, and several other factors. The authors recommend that further study be conducted to explore the impact of cigarette smoking and of inhaling smoke in enclosed spaces on the health of working women and that research be conducted to account for possible differences in physiology that affect risk factors. Supporting data on the incidence of smoking among women are provided.

Rosen, Gerald M. and Edward Lichtenstein. “An employee incentive program to reduce cigarette smoking.” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (American Psychological Association, 1200 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036), October, 1977. p. 957. $9.00. Questionnaire and telephone interview data were obtained from 27 employees to evaluate an incentive program that rewarded nonsmokers with monthly salary bonuses. The program was moderately successful and generally well accepted although some procedural difficulties occurred. The authors conclude that group-environmental approaches to control smoking deserve more implementation and evaluation.

Thomas, Edward G. “Smoking in the office: a burning issue.” *Management World* (Administrative Management Society, Maryland Road,
Willow Grove, PA 19090), April, 1980. pp. 11-12, 40. Reprint available on request.

A survey of U.S. and Canadian companies indicated that nearly 85% of the 300 respondents had no official policy regarding smokers' rights. Of the 45 companies that reported having a policy (usually published in the employee handbook) only 10.6% prohibited smoking in all office areas and only two of these companies hired nonsmokers exclusively. With some exceptions, most companies had neither segregated smokers from nonsmokers in cafeterias nor had special "no-smoking" areas been designated. However, more companies were sponsoring programs to help employees quit smoking, and many companies noted an increase in complaints about smokers by nonsmokers.


While the U.S. government has "taken sides" in the "controversy" over smoking, no evidence of harm or inconvenience due to smoking could be assembled by the Subcommittee on Tobacco of the U.S. Congress. Among the expert witnesses queried were a cultural anthropologist, a survey-taker, and physicians from several medical specialties.


The combined actions of tobacco use and exposure to chemical and physical agents in the workplace present special health hazards. Toxic agents, workplace chemicals, contamination, biological effects, profound effects, and increased accident risk are cited as six possible modes of interaction that can contribute to problems for smokers in certain occupational settings.

Weis, William L. "Can you afford to hire smokers?" Personnel Administrator (American Society for Personnel Administration, 30 Park Drive, Berea, OH 44017), May, 1981. pp. 71-78. $2.50.

Weis concludes that handsome dividends from imposing smoking bans can be found in the areas of absenteeism, mortality, insurance, on-the-job productivity, maintenance, depreciation on furniture and equipment, and employee morale. Each area is cost out for savings in real dollars and for psychological benefits. A chart details the "Annual cost per smoker" for each item, with the total cost per smoker per year, in January, 1981 dollars, given as $4611. Weis has spoken out on this issue in several additional articles: "Cold-shouldering the smoker" (Supervisory Management, September 1981, pp. 31-35); "Smoking: burning a hole in the balance sheet" (Personnel Management, May 1981, pp. 24-29); and "Profits up in smoke" (Personnel Journal, May 1981, pp. 162-165).