

A black and white photograph of a silver fork and a white plate. The fork is positioned vertically on the left side of the frame, with its tines pointing upwards. The plate is partially visible on the right side, showing its rim and a portion of its surface. The background is a plain, light-colored surface. The text "Smoke Free Dining is Just Good Taste" is overlaid on the right side of the image, with a dotted line extending from the end of the second line of text.

Smoke Free Dining
is Just Good Taste.....

Smoking Myths vs Clean Air Truths

If our restaurant goes smoke-free, we'll lose business.

On the contrary, time and time again research has shown that adopting smoke-free policies has no effect on restaurant sales. Almost 74 percent of South Carolinians are nonsmokers and an increasing number say that they prefer dining in restaurants that are smoke-free. In fact, going smoke-free can encourage nonsmokers to dine out more. The rule of thumb is that for every one smoker you lose, you'll gain a table of two nonsmokers. As if that wasn't enough, restaurants that go smoke-free notice a significant increase in the turnover of their tables, since customers are less likely to linger with cigarettes after their meals. More turnover means your restaurant serves more meals.

Our restaurant has a nonsmoking section. That will eliminate health risks, right?

Even when your smoking and nonsmoking sections are separated by a solid partition, secondhand smoke is still a serious risk to customers. With over 4,000 toxic chemicals in cigarettes, there is no safe level of exposure. Each year, 53,000 American nonsmokers die from secondhand smoke. Having a nonsmoking section in a smoking restaurant is like having a non-chlorinated section in a chlorinated swimming pool.

Our smoking section is ventilated. Isn't that all the protection nonsmokers need?

Ventilation systems are designed to remove the odor of smoke rather than the dangerous disease-causing chemicals and gases in the air. Just because the nonsmoking section

isn't hazy with smoke doesn't mean customers aren't at risk, especially small children, the elderly and people with breathing conditions like asthma. For restaurants that don't already have them installed or need to upgrade them, ventilation systems can also be a costly endeavor.

I've heard it's expensive to implement a nonsmoking policy.

One of the best parts about going smoke-free? It costs nothing! Explaining your new policy to your regular customers doesn't require anything except demonstrating your personal commitment to them with your time. Visit their table and spend a few minutes explaining some of the health risks your restaurant is trying to avoid. Over two thirds of South Carolina's smokers want to quit and most can easily refrain from smoking for an hour or two without a problem. Your local tobacco coalition can provide you with attractive signs to explain your new policy, free of charge. Other signs



"Guests are saying thank you, thank you, thank you for going smoke-free. They're very happy."

Joanna Katergaris, Wagon Wheel Restaurant in Fort Lawn

can be printed on your own computer and posted in prominent places.

If my restaurant goes smoke-free, we'll lose our regulars.

Smoke-free restaurants report that even their most dedicated smokers return after a short period of time. And the smokers you'll occasionally lose as customers will be more than made up for with nonsmoking customers who've heard about your new policy and are eager to eat in a smoke-free environment. Plus, many restaurants admit that the wait for a nonsmoking table is consistently longer than for a table in the smoking

"We get a lot of professionals and military personnel who come in for lunch and don't want to go back to work smelling like smoke."

Heidi Midgett & Bridget Friday
Beef O'Brady's in Beaufort

section. Eliminating the smoking section will mean everyone is seated sooner and your restaurant will remain at peak capacity during your busy hours, regardless of whether you lose one or two smoking regulars.

The health of our staff isn't my problem. They make a choice to come work here. I can't be held financially accountable for their welfare.

Restaurant employees are the occupational group most heavily exposed to secondhand smoke. South Carolina's waiters and waitresses, hostesses and chefs are 50% more likely to develop lung cancer than people in other professions. So you're thinking that if the risks bother them, they should look for another job? The courts don't think so. If you knowingly allow your employees to work in a dangerous environment (and everyone knows secondhand smoke is dangerous), you could be held financially responsible for any future health problems they may develop as a result of secondhand smoke. They

say the restaurant business is one of the toughest markets out there... see how tough it is after you've had to settle a lawsuit brought against you by a 27-year-old waiter with lung cancer.

Okay, I understand how a restaurant could go smoke-free. But my restaurant also has a great bar. There's no way a bar can be smoke-free.

Look, smokers are in the minority whether they're in a restaurant or a bar. Seventy-four percent of South Carolinians don't smoke and the same figure applies to bar-goers. You're thinking, no way. Every time you look around your bar, it looks like everyone is lighting up. Consider this - bars are one of the smokiest environments out there and when nonsmokers are asked why they don't visit bars more often, smoke is the number one answer they give. Bars are often so polluted with smoke that nonsmokers steer clear of them altogether. In fact, many nonsmokers say they'd go out to bars more if they were smoke-free.

The Buffet Beef O'Brady's Como's Mi Tierra Authentic Mexican Cat & Cleaver CiCi's Pizza Rising High Pavilion Coffee Shop Savannah's Burger King

"Keeping our restaurant smoke free helps to protect our furniture and keeps our dining room's colors warm and bright. A warm, inviting decor can enhance the appetite."

Tony Chu, Red Orchids Restaurant in Charleston

So, maybe going smoke-free won't cost me anything. On the other hand, it won't save me money either.

Going smoke-free is like opening up a savings account for your restaurant and watching the money pour in. Not only are you likely to experience a boost in nonsmoker sales, but you're also going to start seeing visible benefits almost immediately. You'll replace tablecloths, napkins, carpets and other furniture that were previously subject to burn holes less often. Paint and window coverings will become dingy less often and you'll eliminate the need to frequently repaint the interior of your restaurant. You'll never purchase another ashtray again and you can cut the cost of printing matchbooks for customers in need of a light. Like we said,

you'll reduce the risks of lawsuits, which let's face it - are big money. And here's the best part... call your insurance company because many agencies look more favorably on restaurants with smoke-free policies. When it comes to health insurance, providers know that smokers wind up costing them more in the long run. Those costs are passed on to you - according to studies, you spend up to \$5,000 in additional costs every year for each smoker you employ by the time you



take into account increased premiums and lost work. Hazard insurance costs more too. From 1993 to 1997, smoking related restaurant fires caused \$7.2 million in property damage, not to mention six injuries and one death, so they're smart to cut you a break when you go smoke-free.

I'm not willing to go out on a limb. No other South Carolina restaurants are going smoke-free.

You think your restaurant is alone in South Carolina? That none of your competitors are considering similar smoke-free policies? You couldn't be further from the truth. As of August 2004, thousands of restaurants in South Carolina have gone smoke-free. Going smoke-free isn't personal - it's just smart business.

Statistics Don't Lie

80% of Americans don't smoke

South Carolina spends

\$854 million

on healthcare costs caused by smoking, which doesn't even include the financial burden of providing healthcare for people exposed to secondhand smoke

\$485 is the average federal and state tax burden carried by each household in South Carolina to help offset smoking related health costs

Smoking causes

\$1,670,000

in lost productivity each year in South Carolina

Nearly

74%

of South Carolinians don't smoke

90,000

South Carolina kids who are currently under 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking-related illnesses



Your Restaurant's Checklist for Success

- ✓ Remember that you stand to gain more if you announce your policy change with pride. So, **brag about it!**
- ✓ **Decide on a date** that your policy will go into effect. Think about picking a day that will be significant to people and also to media. Maybe the Great American Smoke-Out on the third Thursday in November, Kick Butts day in late March or early April, World No Tobacco Day on May 31 or a significant national holiday like Memorial Day or Thanksgiving. Keep in mind that on a day like the Great American Smoke-Out, media outlets will be looking for stop-smoking stories. What could be better than having your restaurant featured on the 11 o'clock news?
- ✓ Focus on your **local media**. Give a personal call to local restaurant reviewers to let them know about your smoke-free policy. They may be so impressed they decide to come review your food to celebrate the occasion.
- ✓ Consider writing **a letter to your local paper's editor**, explaining why your restaurant chose to go smoke-free. Your local tobacco coalition can help you gather any statistics you might need to bring your point home.
- ✓ Consider **surveying your customers** so they feel that they've played an active role in your decision. They'll be proud that they've worked to improve their community and are likely to remain faithful to your restaurant no matter what the outcome.
- ✓ **Post attractive and positive signs** announcing your smoke-free policy at the door, in restrooms and even possibly on table tents. Remember that promoting "a smoke-free environment" is a more appealing message than a simple sign that says, "no smoking."
- ✓ **Talk to your staff** about your decision to go smoke-free. Schedule a staff meeting where waiters and waitresses can learn tactics that will help them answer questions customers may pose about the new policy. Offer your staff the opportunity to role play, switching between being the wait staff and the customer. This will help them anticipate possible questions that may stump them.
- ✓ Emphasize to both your staff and your customers that **the health of your staff** is incredibly important to you. While smokers may take up an "us against them" attitude toward nonsmokers, they'll have a hard time marginalizing the health of the waiter taking their order.

✓ If customers do have specific questions about your policy change, be sure your wait staff informs a manager who can **devote more personal attention to answering their questions** thoroughly.

✓ Don't forget to **remove all ashtrays** from your restaurant. Go ahead and toss them to keep you or anyone else from feeling like the policy is only temporary.

✓ **If your restaurant has a cigarette vending machine, have it removed.** It shouldn't cost you a dime - just call them vendor and tell them you no longer need their services.

✓ Use this opportunity to **encourage any staff members who smoke to quit.** Consider inviting a smoking cessation expert to address the group at a staff meeting. Explain that the new policy benefits them in addition to your customers and that their health risks begin to drop significantly, even just days after their last cigarette. Post South Carolina's toll-free Quit for Keeps Quitline 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848) in a prominent place near any telephones in your establishment.

Establish an entrance policy for staff members who can't break the habit, such as requiring that staff on breaks cannot smoke within 50 feet of the building's entrance. Remind them that the smoke-free policy is in effect 24 hours a day - not just when the restaurant is open to customers.

✓ **Be patient.** Change doesn't happen overnight. Sales-tax data repeatedly indicates that smoke-free policies do not hurt restaurant business. However, it will be difficult to watch that occasionally irate smoker walk out the door, presumably to a competing restaurant with no smoke-free policy in place. Keep in mind that with every insistent smoker who goes elsewhere, your competitors' restaurants are becoming more and more smoke-filled, which in turn is alienating more and more nonsmokers and sending them straight to smoke-free facilities like yours.

“Guests are much happier. Since instituting smoke-free Sundays, we’ve seen our church business increase greatly and haven’t experienced any negativity from smokers.”

Warren Snell
Fatz Cafe in Florence

Clean the Air & Enjoy the Benefits

Your upholstery, furniture and wall paint will last longer and need to be replaced far less often.

Your staff will breathe freely and you'll be able to rest easy, knowing that you've avoided possible litigation down the road.

You'll watch your customer base grow. Remember - expect to gain two new non-smoking customers for every smoker you lose.

You can enjoy the publicity and name recognition that comes along with going smoke-free. Your restaurant's name will be listed in South Carolina's Smoke-Free Restaurant Guide and you may receive additional press coverage from local media outlets.

Your tables will turnover faster, which will result in higher profits. Cutting out smoking means customers will have less reason to dally after they've finished their meals.

For more information or referrals to smoke-free restaurants, call the South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative at (803) 530-6720, visit www.smokefreesc.org or call your local health district. Also, be sure to check out the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation at www.no-smoke.org.