

Smoke-Free Parks and Playgrounds Fact Sheet

Capital District
Tobacco-Free Coalition



Outdoor smoking causes harm to people nearby

- Second-hand smoke is a class A carcinogen: a substance known to cause cancer in humans. There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.¹
- The level of toxic second-hand smoke within a few feet of a person smoking outdoors can be as high as second-hand smoke levels indoors.²
- The amount of poison in the air increases according to the number of people smoking.³

Outdoor smoking is an environmental hazard

- Cigarette butts are the most common type of litter on earth. They accumulate outside of buildings, in parking lots and streets where they can be transported through storm drains to streams, rivers and beaches.⁴
- Cigarette filters are made of plastic and can take up to 10 years to degrade.⁵
- Small children are at risk from swallowing discarded butts. In the U.S., about 8000 cases of toxic exposures are due to ingesting cigarette butts each year.⁶
- Birds, fish and other animals often swallow discarded cigarette butts. This can result in malnutrition, starvation, and death for these creatures.⁷

¹Environmental Protection Agency from <http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/smoke/01.htm>

²Repace JL and Rupprecht AA. Outdoor Air Pollution From Secondhand Smoke. Presented at the 13th World Conference on Tobacco Or Health, Washington, DC, July 12-15, 2006.

³Ibid.

⁴Register K. Cigarette Butts as Litter-Toxic as Well as Ugly. Underwater Naturalist, volume 25(2), August 2000.

⁵Clean Virginia Waterways from <http://www.longwood.edu/cleanva/cigbuttbiodegradable.htm>

⁶Los Angeles County Department of Public Health from: <http://www.lapublichealth.org/tob/about.htm>.

⁷Ibid.