
SMOKING IN MOTOR VEHICLES WITH CHILDREN PRESENT

January, 2009

THE LAW

- As of January 21, 2009, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits persons from smoking or having lighted tobacco in a motor vehicle if another person who is less than 16 years old is inside the vehicle.
- Any person – driver or passenger – in a motor vehicle, who is smoking while someone else under the age of 16 is present, will be committing an offence.
- The law applies to both moving and stationary vehicles and will apply to motor vehicles, regardless of whether any window, sunroof, rooftop, door, or other feature of the vehicle is open.

PURPOSE

- To protect children from the harmful health effects caused by exposure to second-hand smoke in motor vehicles.

SECOND-HAND SMOKE AND CHILDREN

- Second-hand smoke in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times greater than in a smoker's home.
- Children are especially vulnerable to second-hand smoke because they breathe more air relative to body weight. As a result, they absorb more tobacco smoke toxins than adults.
- Children who breathe second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer health problems such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, asthma, and cancer and cardiac disease later in life.
- Exposure to second-hand smoke has also been linked to lower cognitive test scores compared with children who were not exposed.

ENFORCEMENT

- Ontario police have the authority to enforce the prohibition of smoking a cigarette, or lighting tobacco in a motor vehicle if another person who is less than 16 years old is inside the vehicle.
- Voluntary compliance is our primary objective.
- Persons who fail to comply with the prohibition may be ticketed, or if charged and found guilty, be subject to a fine up to \$250.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.ontario.ca/smokefree
- For help quitting smoking, contact Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 or www.smokershelpline.ca.