

# Secondhand Smoke Exposure in Cuyahoga County (2003-2006)

April 2007

Data Brief

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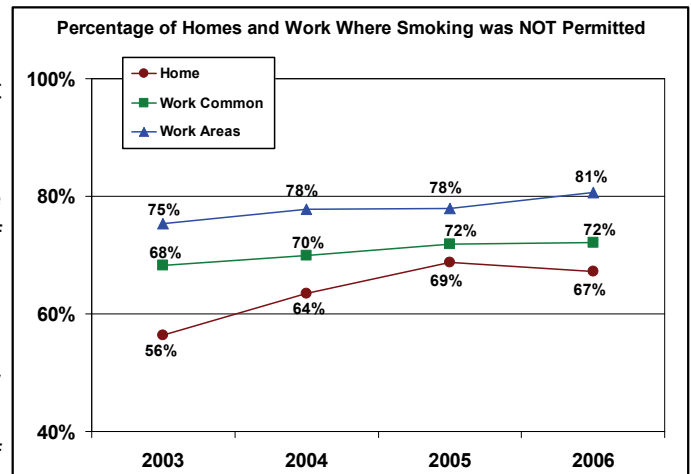
In 2006, 17% of non-smokers (or 75,000 Cuyahoga County adults) worked for a company that still permitted smoking in work areas.

The Cuyahoga County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey is supported with funds from the Ohio Tobacco Prevention Foundation and the Community Vision Council

## Increasing Restrictions at Work and in the Home

In November 2006, Ohio passed Issue 5, a statewide ban restricting smoking in indoor workplaces. Cuyahoga County has been tracking smoking policies in the workplace for the past four years, with the final data point being collected just prior to the election.

In 2003, most employees worked for businesses that restricted smoking in both common areas at work (68%) and work areas (75%). Over the past four years, more restrictive policies have been reported. Prohibition of smoking in common work areas increased to 72% by 2006; rules in work areas increased to 81%. While promising, in 2006, nearly 20% of Cuyahoga County adults (17% of non-smokers and 29% of smokers, data not shown) worked



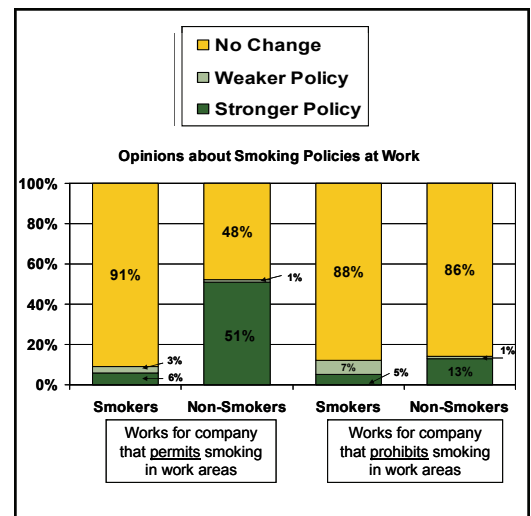
for a company that still permitted smoking in work areas. In addition to providing valuable baseline and retrospective information regarding shifts in local policies, this local trend data will be important as compliance with the new ban is tracked in the coming years.

Regarding rules at home, policies have also become more restrictive, and in fact, the shift is even more notable than at work (see page 2 for more details).

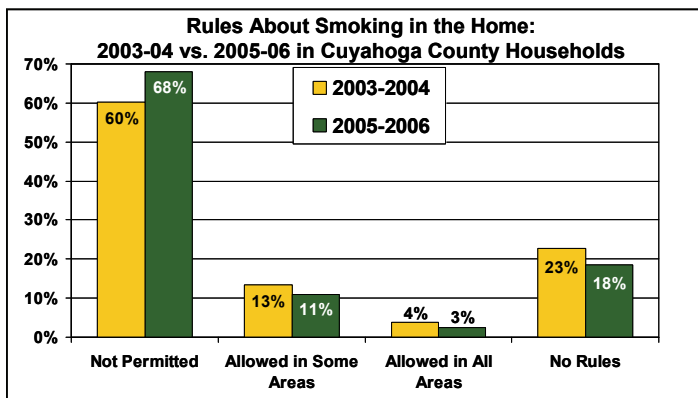
**What do workers want?** Workers were asked about the smoking policy at their workplace — did they prefer a stronger policy, a weaker policy, or no change?

Among those who worked for a company that allowed smoking in work areas, 91% of smokers wanted no change, as compared to 48% of non-smokers. Another 51% of non-smokers wished for a stronger policy.

Interestingly, among those working for a company that prohibited smoking, 88% of smokers and 85% of non-smokers preferred that no change take place, while 5% of smokers and 13% of non-smokers preferred a stronger policy.



### Rules about Smoking in the Home

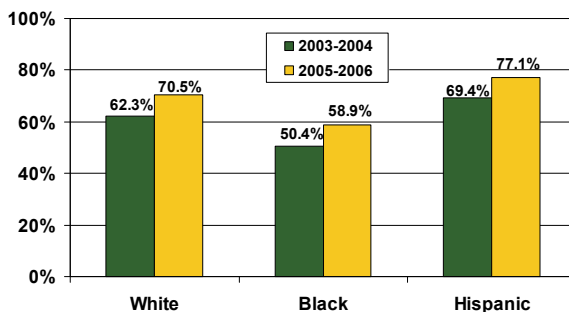


Generally, households in Cuyahoga County either did not permit smoking in the home or had no specific rules about smoking. Over the past four years, a change occurred in the percentage of households that did not permit smoking in the home, increasing from 60% in 2003-04 to 68% in 2005-06. It appeared that this change was largely driven by those who initially had no rules established, seen in the percentage drop from 23% to 18% in this category.

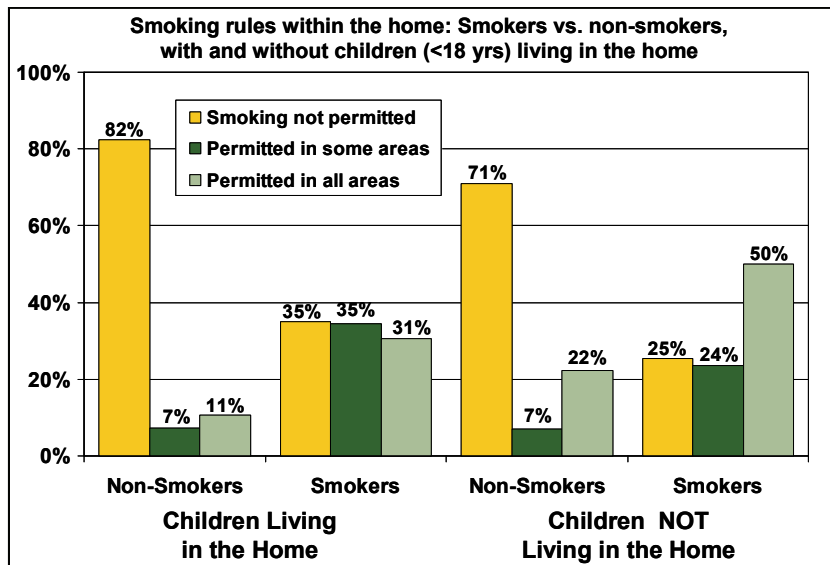
### Rules about Smoking in the Home by Race

With regard to race, the upward trend in restricting smoking in the home was mirrored in each group, and each appeared to have made similar increases (roughly 8%). Thus, each group added equally to the trend. In general, however, Black households were least likely to have no smoking policies at home. Hispanic households were the most restrictive, though caution should be used in making interpretations about this group as the sample size was relatively much smaller than that of the other groups.

Percentage of Homes Where Smoking was NOT Permitted, by Race



### Rules about Smoking in the Home by Smoking Status and Presence of Children



Children are often said to have the highest level of involuntary secondhand smoke exposure. The figure to the left shows the level of smoking restriction in the home by smoking status (current smoker or not) and whether there were children (<18 years old) living in the home.

As expected, non-smokers, with or without children in the home, had the most restrictive rules with regard to smoking, although those with children in the home were more likely to restrict smoking than those without (82% vs. 71%).

Among smokers, those with children in the home were more likely to restrict smoking in the home (35% entirely; 35% to some areas), when compared to smokers without children in the home (25% entirely; 24% to some areas). However, when considered overall, nearly 70% of smokers with children in the home continued to allow smoking in some or all areas of the home.

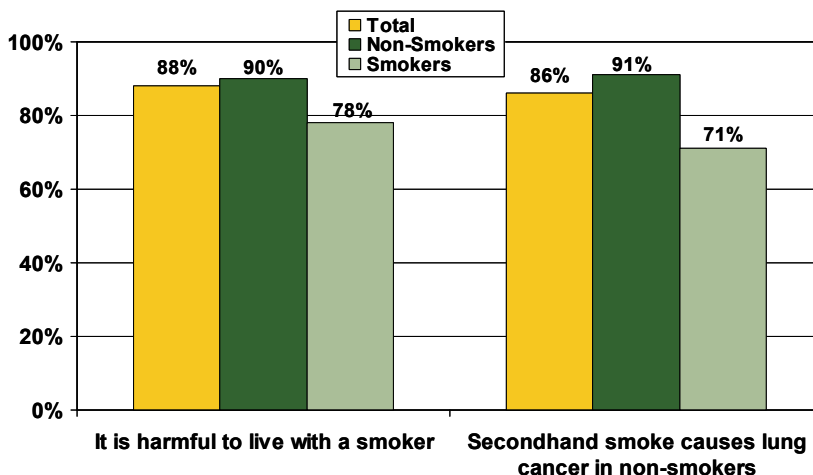
**“Nearly 70% of smokers with children in the home continued to allow smoking in some or all areas of the home.”**

## Opinions about Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Respondents were asked about their opinions on the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure. Overall, 88% of respondents considered living with a smoker to be harmful, while 86% understood that secondhand smoke can cause lung cancer in non-smokers.

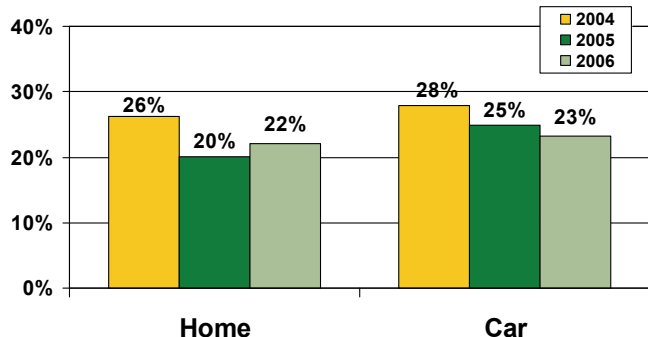
When considering responses by smoking status, smokers were less likely to consider smoking to be as harmful as compared to non-smokers. In particular, the majority of non-smokers (91%) considered secondhand smoke to be a contributor to lung cancer in non-smokers, compared to less than three-quarters of smokers (71%).

Opinions about Secondhand Smoke: Smokers vs. Non-Smokers



## Secondhand Smoke Exposure at Home and in the Car

Exposure to Cigarette Smoke in the Past Week at Home and in the Car



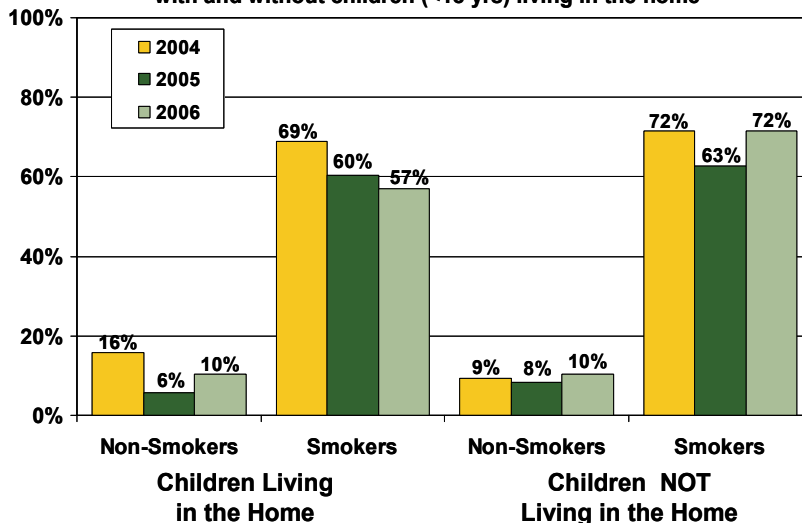
In addition to their home rules about smoking, respondents were asked to report how often in the past week they had been exposed to secondhand smoke both at home and in their cars. Reported exposure in the home declined from a high of 26% in 2004 to 22% in 2006. A similar, more steady decline was reported regarding exposure in the car, falling from a high of 28% in 2004 to 23% in 2006.

Though the vast majority of non-smokers were able to restrict their exposure to secondhand smoke, on average, 10% have been in their home with a smoker and 13% in their car with a smoker in the past week (data not shown).

## Secondhand Smoke Exposure at Home by Smoking Status and Presence of Children

Non-smokers with and without children reported the least amount of secondhand smoke exposure in their homes in the past week as compared to smokers with and without children. Among smokers, those *with* children reported less exposure in their homes than did smokers without children. However, more than 50% of smokers with children still reported exposure to an average of 2 children per household (data on children per household not shown). However, the messages about secondhand smoke exposure did appear to be influencing smokers with children as their rate of reported exposure has steadily declined over the past three years.

Exposure to smoke in the home: Smokers vs. non-smokers, with and without children (<18 yrs) living in the home



**Local Data Source:** Cuyahoga County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (CC-BRFSS), 2003-2006.

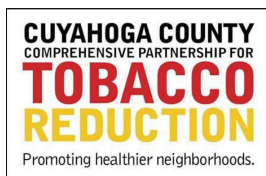
**Methodology:** The local CC-BRFSS is a point-in-time survey modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) state-based system of health surveys administered annually by each state. The BRFSS is conducted via telephone interviews of randomly selected adults from randomly sampled, telephone-equipped households. A total of 5,301 adults were surveyed between 2003 and 2006. All participants' answers were aggregated and weighted so that the overall group represents all Cuyahoga County adults based on Census population figures (see the Cuyahoga County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey Methodology Brief available on the Center for Health Promotion Research website for more details – see web address below).

**Measures:**

- Current cigarette smoker – Has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in lifetime and reports smoking everyday or some days
- Non-smoker – Has not smoked more than 100 cigarettes in lifetime; or Has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in lifetime and reports not currently smoking at all
- Rules about smoking at home – Reported one of the following: smoking not permitted anywhere, smoking permitted anywhere, smoking permitted in some places, or no rules about smoking
- Rules about smoking at work – Reported separately one of the following for common work areas and work areas: smoking not permitted anywhere, smoking permitted anywhere, smoking permitted in some places, or no official policy
- Exposure to secondhand smoke in the home – Reported exposure to smoke in the home at least once during the past seven days
- Exposure to secondhand smoke in the car – Reported exposure to smoke in the car during the past seven days
- Children in the home – Reported having at least one child (<18 years old) living in the home

For more information on the methodology, including the sample description, please refer to the Cuyahoga County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey Methodology Brief available on the Center for Health Promotion Research website (see web address below).

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