

# Monitoring & Evaluation Program



UW-Extension  
UW Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Center for Health Policy and Program Evaluation

Program Brief  
March 2002

## Results of 2001 Wisconsin Worksite Smoking Policy Survey

Barbara L. Hill, MSSW  
Statewide Evaluation  
Program Coordinator

Amy E. Anderson, MA  
Research Specialist

D. Paul Moberg, Ph.D.,  
Director, Center for Health  
Policy and Program  
Evaluation

Ann Christiansen, MPH  
Monitoring and Evaluation  
Program Coordinator

The Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board has focused attention on the health risks of environmental tobacco smoke as part of its comprehensive tobacco control program. Several measurable goals were developed to track progress in this area. One of the goals is for 90% of Wisconsin worksites to be smoke-free by 2005.

In order to monitor progress on this goal, the Monitoring and Evaluation Program developed a baseline survey regarding the smoking policy in Wisconsin worksites with five or more employees. The survey assessed over 2000 Wisconsin worksites regarding aspects of their smoking policy, including the indoor and outdoor policy for employees, customers and visitors, the type of industry that best describes the worksite or company and the main reasons for a smoking policy or lack of a policy.

### Major Findings for 2001:

Monitoring and Evaluation  
Program  
370 WARF, 610 Walnut St  
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Patrick L. Remington, M.D.,  
M.P.H., Principal Investigator

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Ph.D.,  
Co-Investigator, University of  
Wisconsin-Extension

D. Paul Moberg, Ph.D., Co-  
Investigator, Center for  
Health Policy and Program  
Evaluation

David Ahrens, MS, Program  
Manager

PHONE 608-263-8627  
FAX 608-262-2425  
www.medsch.wisc.edu/  
pophealth/mep/

- **An estimated 74% of Wisconsin worksites, with 5 or more employees, ban smoking indoors.**
- **Persons working in restaurant and recreation industries are most likely to be exposed to smoke while at work - 53% of these worksites reported they permit smoking indoors.**
- **The main reason cited for having a smoking policy is health concerns. The main reason mentioned for not having a smoking policy is that few or no people smoke at the worksite.**

## Background

Most adults spend much of their day at work. In order to protect them from the effects of environmental tobacco smoke, smoke-free worksites are necessary. Since the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board has set a goal for 90% of Wisconsin worksites to become smoke-free by 2005, the current study is designed to assess the prevalence of smoke-free worksites at the present time.

During 2001, some Wisconsin tobacco control coalitions surveyed local employers to determine their smoking policies. The questionnaires developed by coalitions were not uniform and not all areas of the state were surveyed. Therefore, the Monitoring and Evaluation Program developed and implemented a statewide survey of Wisconsin worksites to assess current smoking policies.

## Methods

In September 2001, a 17-question survey was sent to a stratified random sample of approximately 2200 worksites in Wisconsin. After exploring several mailing list options, the Experian Company was selected due to the current nature of their data, affordability, and inclusion of business telephone numbers in addition to addresses. Experian's entire database of Wisconsin worksites includes over 40,000 locations.

The survey questions were developed based on a review of the literature and on previous worksite surveys conducted in Wisconsin. The definition of worksite used for this survey was, "the office, building or facility in which you work". Worksites were stratified into four groups based on the number of employees at the worksite: 5-19, 20-99, 100-499 and 500 or more employees.

The survey assessed the number of employees at the worksite, type of industry, reasons for having or not having a smoking policy and inside and outside smoking policies for employees as well as customers and visitors. In addition, information was also collected regarding who was responsible for development of worksite health and safety policies, smoking policy in company-owned vehicles, employee compliance with the smoking policy and whether the smoking policy applies to all Wisconsin worksites.

After a second mailing of the survey and telephone follow-up to a random sample of non-responders, a 61% return rate was achieved. The response rate varied somewhat across employee size categories with the highest response from the 100-499 category and the lowest response from the 5-19 category. The summary results for all worksites (n=1209 responses) in this report are weighted to account for the stratified sampling design and non-response.

## Results

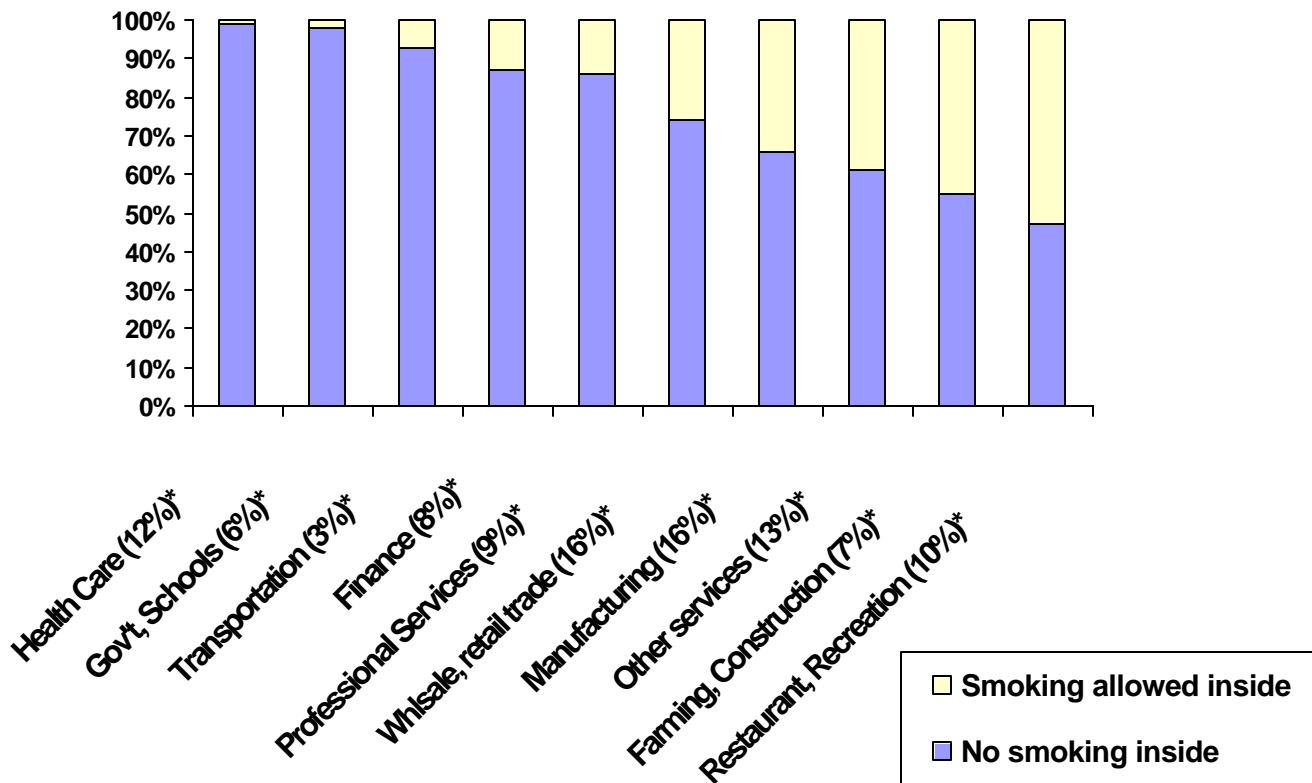
One of the most important findings from this study is the overall extent to which worksites in Wisconsin ban all indoor smoking. The results, shown in Table 1, demonstrate that 74% of all worksites with 5 or more employees ban smoking inside worksite buildings by employees, customers and visitors. While there is slight variation among different size worksites, the differences are not statistically significant.

**Table 1. Comparison of Smoking Policies in WI Worksites by Size of Worksite, 2001**

Are employees and customers allowed to smoke inside the building?	Number of Employees				WEIGHTED TOTAL
	5 - 19	20 - 99	100 - 499	500+	
No, nowhere inside	75%	72%	78%	73%	74%
Yes, but only in designated areas or times	19%	25%	21%	27%	21%
Yes, anywhere inside	7%	3%	1%	0%	5%

Additionally, it is important to note differences in smoking policy for worksites from various types of industry. Worksites were originally coded into twelve industry categories derived from the larger industry classification system of the Current Population Survey. Categories were further consolidated, resulting in the ten categories shown in Figure 1. Worksites categorized as restaurants, lodging, entertainment, or recreation (10% of the worksites surveyed) were most likely to allow smoking somewhere indoors.

**Figure 1. Distribution of Indoor Smoking Policy by Type of Industry, 2001**



\* Weighted percentage of all worksites for each industry category

The survey also inquired about reasons for having a smoking policy, for worksites with a policy, and reasons for not having a smoking policy, for those without a policy. The main reasons given are summarized in Table 2. The results demonstrate the main reason for having a smoking policy is

health concerns (68%) while the main reason given for NOT having a smoking policy is that few or no people smoke at the worksite (61%).

**Table 2. Main Reasons Selected for Having or Not Having a Worksite Smoking Policy \***

What are the main reasons for having a smoking policy at your worksite? (n=1071)	Category percent	Of all worksites
Health concerns	68%	52%
Cleanliness (e.g. ashes and cigarette butts)	53%	42%
Fire or Safety reasons	52%	39%
Employee request	37%	30%
What are the main reasons for NOT having a smoking policy at your worksite? (n=111)	Category percent	Of all worksites
Few or no people smoke at worksite	61%	11%
Other reasons	23%	4%
Employee request	16%	3%
Customer demand	12%	2%

\* Respondents asked to check all reasons that apply: n = number of worksites responding.

## Comment

The results of this survey indicate almost three-quarters (74%) of Wisconsin worksites with 5 or more employees do not allow smoking anywhere inside buildings at the worksite. This provides baseline data for the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board goal that 90% of worksites will be smoke-free by 2005 and also provides a comparison for coalition results from their local worksite smoking policy surveys. According to our survey, health care, government/schools, and transportation industries have already achieved this goal. These are worksite covered by Wisconsin's clean indoor air law.

Of particular concern are smoking rates in worksites that are not covered by Wisconsin's clean indoor air law, such as restaurant/recreation, farming/construction, other services, manufacturing and trade categories. These industries can expose large numbers of employees and customers to the effects of environmental tobacco smoke.

Reasons given by employers for having or not having smoking policies at their worksites provide useful information for coalitions or individual employees wanting to influence a worksite to implement a smoke-free policy. Survey results demonstrate that employers indicate health concerns and employee requests are two of the main reasons for adopting their smoking policy. For those worksites that do not have a smoking policy the main reason given is that few or no people smoke at the worksite.

---

The Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board provided support for this report.

Earnestine Willis, M.D., M.P.H., Chair, David Gundersen, M.P.H., Executive Director

Full technical report is available from the Monitoring & Evaluation Program. Please call (608)263-8627 to request a copy.

Suggested citation: Hill B, Anderson A, Moberg DP, Christiansen A. *Results of 2001 Wisconsin Worksite Smoking Policy Survey*. Monitoring & Evaluation Program Brief, Madison WI: UW Medical School, March 2002.