

VENTILATION CAN NOT PROTECT AGAINST THE HEALTH HARMS OF EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE (ETS)

The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) is the national professional association that provides technical guidance on matters of engineering design for ventilation systems. ASHRAE recently developed a Position Document on the health consequences of Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS).

ASHRAE has concluded that ventilation can not eliminate the lethal and disease-causing health effects caused by exposure to ETS in indoor environments and that the only means of effectively eliminating the harms attributable to ETS is to ban smoking activity.

Key findings and conclusions of the ASHRAE Position Document are summarized below:

- It is the consensus of the medical community and its cognizant authorities¹ that “involuntary smoking” due to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is a health risk causing lung cancer, heart disease and exacerbation of asthma and other respiratory effects.
- No acceptable level of ETS exposure has been identified nor is there any expectation that further research will identify such a level.
- Adverse health effects of exposure to ETS may extend to gestation as ETS components and metabolites reach the fetus of pregnant mothers who are exposed (scientific evidence indicates ETS is a causal factor in SIDS).
- At present the only means of effectively eliminating the health risk associated with indoor exposure to ETS is to ban smoking activity.
- No engineering approaches, including current and advanced dilution ventilation, air cleaning technologies, or “air curtains” have been demonstrated or should be relied upon to control health risks from ETS exposure in spaces where smoking occurs.
- Hundreds of municipalities and other jurisdictions as well as several entire nations have adopted bans on indoor smoking.
- ASHRAE encourages the elimination of smoking in the indoor environment.

ASHRAE Position Document:

http://www.ashrae.org/content/ASHRAE/ASHRAE/ArticleAltFormat/20058211239_347.pdf

¹ Five major cognizant authorities have examined the ETS evidence including the U.S. Surgeon General, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Research Council, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the National Toxicology Program.