

Compliance with California's Smoke-Free Workplace Law Among Stand-Alone Bars in Los Angeles County

Mark D. Weber, Ph.D., Shari Mills, Ph.D., Laura S. Park, M.P.H. | *Los Angeles County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program*

>PROBLEM

The workplace is a primary source of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure and bar and restaurant workers have higher levels of exposure than other occupational groups.

To protect workers and patrons, the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law took effect on January 1, 1995 and prohibited smoking in most places of employment with bars, taverns, and gaming clubs given until January 1, 1998 to comply.

>OBJECTIVE

This study assesses long-term compliance with the law and correlates of compliance among stand-alone bars in Los Angeles County.

>METHODS

A population-based annual site inspection survey of a random sample of Los Angeles County bars was conducted between 1998 and 2002, with a complete census of stand-alone bars conducted in 2004.

Beginning in 2001, a brief interview of the bar owner, manager, or bartender was conducted following the site inspection to determine his/her smoking status, if he/she favors repealing the smoke-free workplace law, and if so, why.

Logistic regression models were used to evaluate the statistical significance of changes in patron and employee smoking compliance over time, and to examine associations between patron compliance and the following variables: designation of an outdoor smoking area, sale of tobacco products on the premises, bar management/staff attitude about repealing the smoke-free workplace law and smoking status. Interaction terms were included in the models to examine the consistency of these effects over time.

>RESULTS

Significant increases in patron and employee compliance were found between 1998 and 2004 (Figure 1). However, the rate of increase in patron compliance has slowed over time.

Patron compliance was significantly lower in bars:

- without designated outdoor smoking areas, although the difference in compliance narrowed over time (Figure 2);
- that sold tobacco products on the premises (Figure 3);
- where the bar owner, manager, or bartender favored repealing the smoke-free workplace law (Figure 4); and
- where the bar owner, manager, or bartender was a smoker (Figure 5).

Forty-one percent of bar owners, managers, and bartenders favored repealing the law with the most frequently cited reasons being "the law has hurt business" (62.5%) and "smoking should be the owner's choice, not the government's" (49.6%).

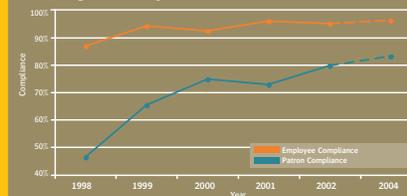
>CONCLUSIONS

The law has been very effective at reducing patron and employee smoking in stand-alone bars.

Recommendations include:

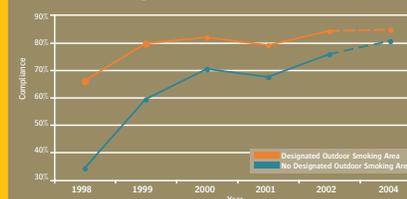
- increasing the effectiveness of intervention activities by targeting correlates of patron compliance;
- educational campaigns targeted to stand-alone bar owners and staff to counter perceptions of lost revenue due to the law; and
- more rigorous enforcement and severe penalties for repeat violators such as alcohol license revocation.

Figure 1. Trends in Patron and Employee Compliance with California's Smoke-Free Workplace Law in Los Angeles County Stand-Alone Bars



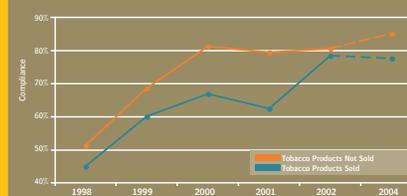
Results of logistic regression, controlling for varying survey intervals, indicate significant increasing linear trends for patron ($p < .001$) and employee ($p < .001$) compliance.

Figure 2. Trends in Patron Compliance in Los Angeles County Stand-Alone Bars With and Without Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas



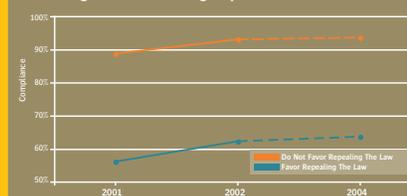
Results of logistic regression, controlling for year and varying survey intervals, indicate that patron compliance was significantly lower in bars without outdoor designated smoking areas ($p < .001$).

Figure 3. Trends in Patron Compliance in Los Angeles County Stand-Alone Bars Selling and Not Selling Tobacco Products



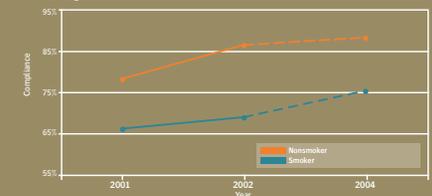
Results of logistic regression, controlling for year and varying survey intervals, indicate that patron compliance was significantly lower in bars that sold tobacco products ($p < .001$).

Figure 4. Trends in Patron Compliance in Los Angeles County Stand-Alone Bars with Management/Staff Favoring and Not Favoring Repeal of the Law



Results of logistic regression, controlling for year and varying survey intervals, indicate that patron compliance was significantly lower in bars with management/staff favoring repeal of the law ($p < .001$).

Figure 5. Trends in Patron Compliance in Los Angeles County Stand-Alone Bars with Smoking and Nonsmoking Management/Staff



Results of logistic regression, controlling for year and varying survey intervals, indicate that patron compliance was significantly lower in bars with management/staff who smoke ($p < .001$).

