



McLennan County Worksite Tobacco Survey Report 2013

July 22, 2013

Overview

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that nearly 50,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease attributable to secondhand smoke exposure.¹ Exposure to secondhand smoke has shown to have an immediate adverse impact on the cardiovascular system in turn increasing risks for heart attack and stroke.² The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District conducted a worksite tobacco survey to large employers across McLennan County to assess the tobacco protection levels of employers. The survey's response rate of 64% (N=75) yielded the majority (77%) of large employers have an existing policy in place for tobacco use at their facilities. The survey also indicated the majority of employers do not have tobacco-free campuses (17%), a comprehensive policy, leaving employees and customers exposed to secondhand smoke.

Survey Methods

To meet the criteria for inclusion, the worksite had to employ 50 or more employees according to the listed number from the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce. The survey was addressed to the wellness coordinator or human resources representative of that business, agency or organization. The survey was sent electronically via email in the beginning of May 2013 with a link to SurveyMonkey®. It was only sent electronically to worksites who listed their electronic contact information. After four weeks, the survey was mailed for follow up to those who did not respond electronically and to those who did not have a listed email address. After 4 weeks of mailing the surveys, phone interviews were conducted. The entire survey process spanned 11 weeks. Below is the summary of response rates.

TABLE. Survey response rates from worksite contacts by multiple methods.

Response	E-Mail (n= 51)		Mail (n=106)		Phone (n=58)		Total (N=118)*	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Yes	12	(24)	48	(45)	15	(26)	75	(64)
No	39	(76)	58	(55)	43	(74)	43	(36)

* The total number of worksites surveyed, some worksites were surveyed via multiple methods as seen above

Results

All of the survey responses were compiled and reported in their respective frequencies using simple column graphs. For the majority of the questions 100% (N=75) of the respondents gave a response. When asked about administrative and employee support 93% (N=70) gave a response. It is thought that the previous question appeared subjective and the respondents did not feel as though they could give an accurate account of their worksites employees or administration, thus a lower response rate for these questions.

With the question asked: *Does your agency, business or organization have a tobacco use policy?* The respondents answered in the following manner (Figure 1).

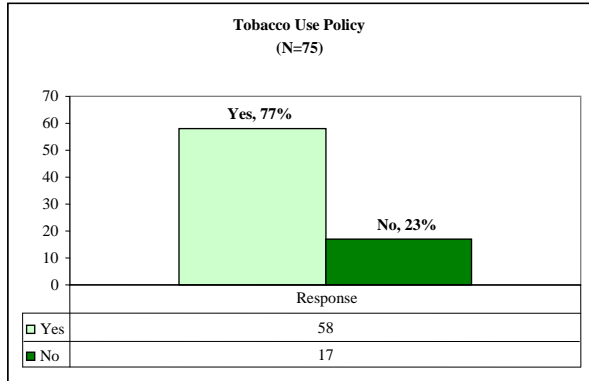


Figure 1.

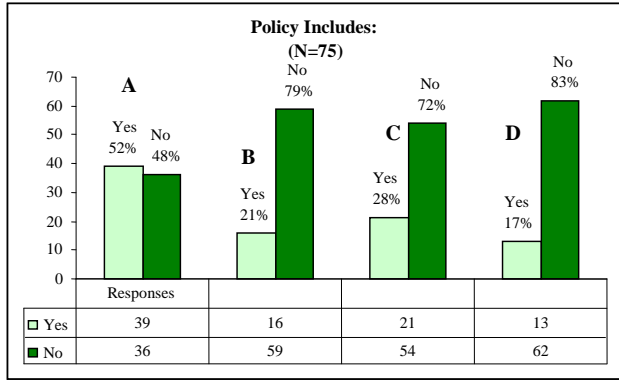


Figure 2.

The Respondents were asked (Figure 2) - *Does the policy:*

- A.** Permit Tobacco use in designated areas only.
- B.** Eliminate smoking within the facilities and within 25 feet of entrances, exit ways, air intakes, and open windows.
- C.** Create a tobacco-free facility.
- D.** Create a tobacco-free property.

77% of employers have some degree of a tobacco use policy (Figure 1). Only 17% of employers have comprehensive tobacco use policies in effect, a tobacco-free property (Figure 2). Of the existing policies, those which permitted tobacco use in designated areas only were highest (52%, Figure 2).

Does your workplace have signs indicating tobacco use is prohibited? (Figure 3).

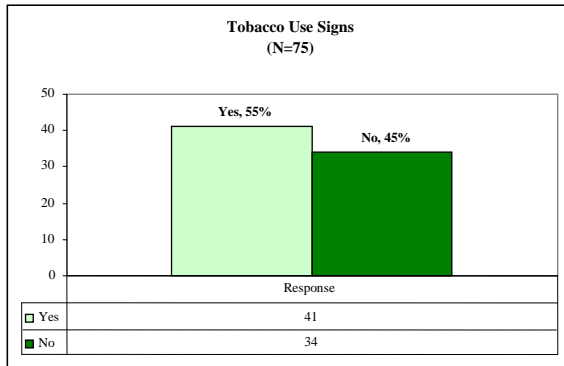


Figure 3.

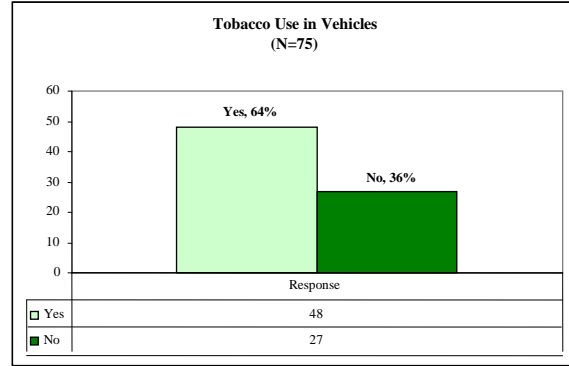


Figure 4.

Does your agency business or organization prohibit smoking while in vehicles used to conduct job-related functions? (Figure 4).

Of employers, 36% do not have restrictions on tobacco use inside of vehicles used for job-related functions (Figure 4). Secondhand smoke exposure in vehicles can be 10 times more concentrated than the level considered “unhealthy” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).³

Is there a process in place to inform customers, visitors, vendor and employees about the tobacco policy that is in effect in your workplace facilities/premises/vehicles? (Figure 5).

Of the worksites reporting there was an existing tobacco policy in place, only 60% of those had a formal process to inform customers, visitors, vendors and employees of their policy (Figure 5). This includes No Smoking or Tobacco Use signs.

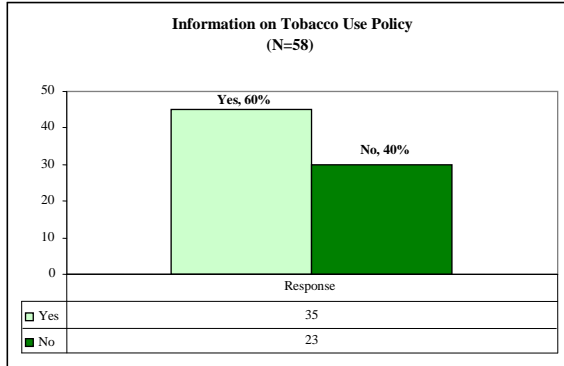


Figure 5.

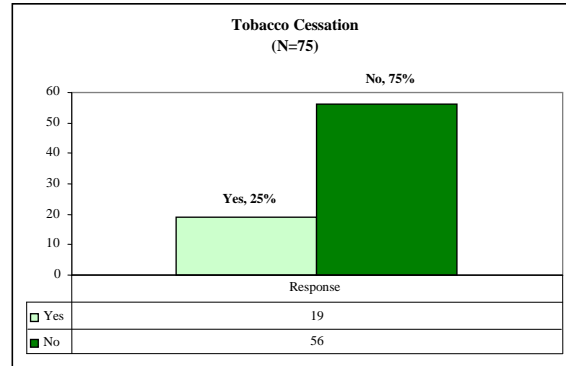


Figure 6.

Does your agency, business, or organization offer tobacco cessation classes to support the policy in place? (Figure 6).

Of the employers who indicated their company/business/agency offered tobacco cessation support, 32% (6) offered support within their company through wellness programs or various worksite wellness initiatives. 68% (13) of worksites who offered tobacco cessation support did so through their health insurance companies.

The respondents were asked: *How is your agency, business, or organization's tobacco policy enforced?* (Figure 7).

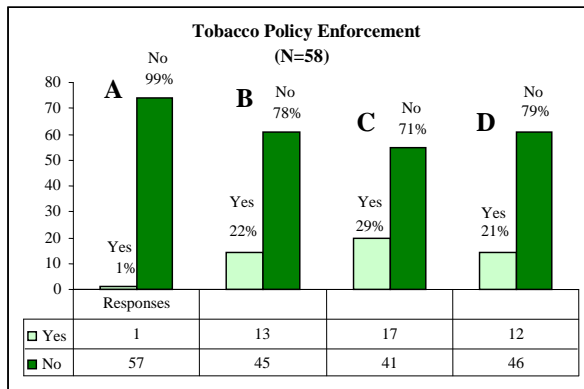


Figure 7.

- A. Fees or Fines
- B. Employee Demerit
- C. Violator is asked to leave premise
- D. Tobacco policy is not enforced

Of the worksites that already had an existing tobacco use policy when asked if the policy was enforced, 79% (Figure 7) stated the policy was not enforced. Asking the violator to leave the premise was the most common form of enforcement (29%).

We then asked the respondents what they perceived employee and administrative support would be for a smoke-free environment at their workplaces (Figure 8).

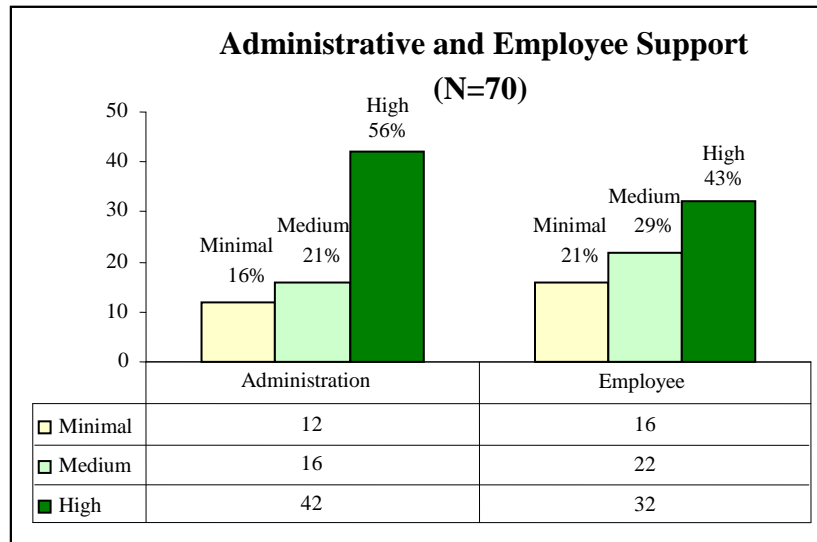


Figure 8.

It was noted that the previous question appeared subjective and the respondents did not feel as though they could give an accurate account of their worksite’s employees or administration’s support. We feel this is the reason for a lower response on these particular questions (Figure 8).

Conclusion

The survey which the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District conducted on tobacco use in worksites across McLennan County yielded a response rate of 64% (N=75), revealing 77% (Figure 1) of these worksites already having an existing tobacco use policy. Only 17% of worksites have a comprehensive tobacco protection policy, a tobacco free campus. This survey indicates large employers throughout McLennan County have different levels of tobacco protection for their employees and customers, ultimately leaving employees and customers exposed to secondhand smoke.

Report prepared by:
 Kahler Stone, Epidemiologist
 Waco-McLennan County Public Health District
 225 W. Waco Drive
 Waco, TX 76707
 (254) 750-5775

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses – United States 2000-2004,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 57(45), November 14, 2008

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

³ California Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA): Air Resources Board, “*Secondhand Smoke in Cars Fact Sheet*”. California Environmental Protection Agency (CEPA) Air Resources Board, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/documents/ets_cars.pdf, accessed on July 10th, 2013.