



## McLennan County Worksite Tobacco Follow-Up Survey Report 2014

January 2015

### 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> In 2013, the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District conducted a worksite tobacco survey among large employers across McLennan County to assess the tobacco protection levels of employers and worksites. A majority (77%) of worksites had some kind of tobacco policy in place, and 17% of worksites had a comprehensive tobacco-free policy<sup>4</sup>. In 2014, the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District conducted a follow-up worksite tobacco survey to large employers in McLennan County to assess and monitor the tobacco and smoke protection levels of worksites and employers. The survey's response rate of 51% (N=81) yielded the majority (87%) of large employers have an existing policy in place for tobacco use or smoking at their facilities. The survey also indicated that less than half (40%) of existing tobacco use and smoking policies included electronic cigarettes. The survey also indicated the majority of employers do not have tobacco-free campuses comprehensive policy (19%), leaving employees and customers exposed to secondhand smoke products.

### 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 as of September, 2014. Worksites surveyed during the 2013 survey were also included. In 2013, thirteen worksites responded that their properties were tobacco-free. This year, these worksites were sent a two question survey about electronic cigarettes in their tobacco-free policies. All of the other worksites were sent an 8 question survey about their smoking or tobacco use policies. The surveys were addressed to the wellness coordinator or human resources representative of that business, agency or organization. The surveys were sent electronically via email in the beginning of October 2014 with a link to SurveyMonkey®. They were only sent electronically to worksites who listed their electronic contact information. After two weeks, a follow up email was sent to those who did not respond, and a letter with the survey link was mailed to those who did not have a listed email address. After 1 week, a letter with the survey link was mailed for follow up to those who did not respond electronically. After 2 weeks of mailing the surveys, phone interviews were conducted. The entire survey process spanned 7 weeks, and all responses were collected through SurveyMonkey®. Below is the summary of response rates (Tables 1-2).

**TABLE 1. Survey response rates from worksite contacts by multiple methods for full tobacco survey**

Response	E-Mail (n= 66)		Mail (n=136)		Phone (n=78)		Total (N=147)*	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Yes	21	(32)	25	(18)	22	(28)	<b>68</b>	<b>(46)</b>
No	45	(68)	111	(82)	56	(72)	<b>79</b>	<b>(54)</b>

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

**TABLE 2. Survey response rates from worksite contacts by multiple methods for electronic cigarette survey**

Response	E-Mail (n= 10)		Mail (n=6)		Phone (n=4)		Total (N=13)*	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Yes	4	(40)	2	(33)	4	(100)	13	(100)
No	6	(60)	4	(67)	0	(0)	0	(0)

\* 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. A majority of the worksites that participated in the survey answered every question. Excluding the question regarding policy enforcement, the average worksite response rate was 95% (N=65) per question.

Smoking policy was defined as: limits or eliminates the use of smoke producing tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, water pipes, etc.

Tobacco use policy was defined as: limits or eliminates the use of any tobacco products including: cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, etc.

With the question asked: *Does your agency, business or organization have a smoking policy, tobacco use policy, or neither?* The respondents answered in the following manner (Figure 1).

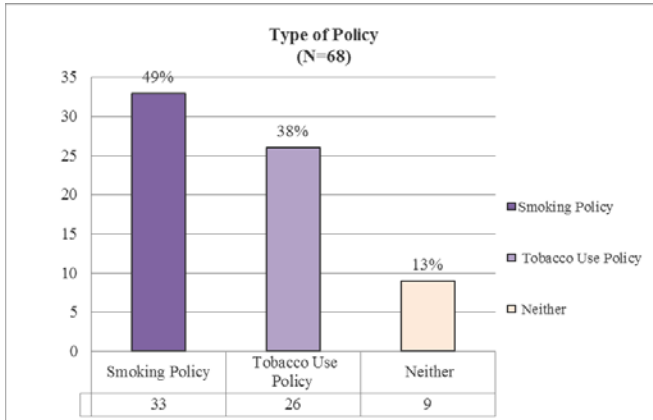


Figure 1

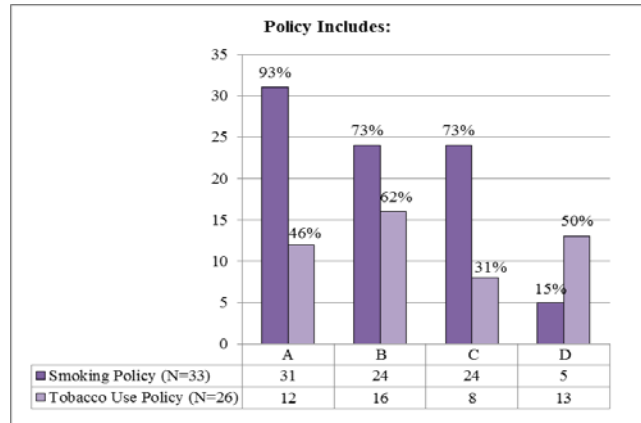


Figure 2

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

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

Approximately 87% of employers have some degree of a smoking or tobacco use policy and 38% of worksites have a larger tobacco use policy (Figure 1). Of the worksites that have tobacco policies, half (50%) of worksites have a comprehensive tobacco-free policy (Figure 2). Of the existing smoking policies, those which permitted tobacco use in designated areas only were highest (93%, Figure 2). Of the existing tobacco policies, those which create a smoke free facility were highest (62%, Figure 2).

*Does your policy include electronic cigarettes? (Figure 3).*

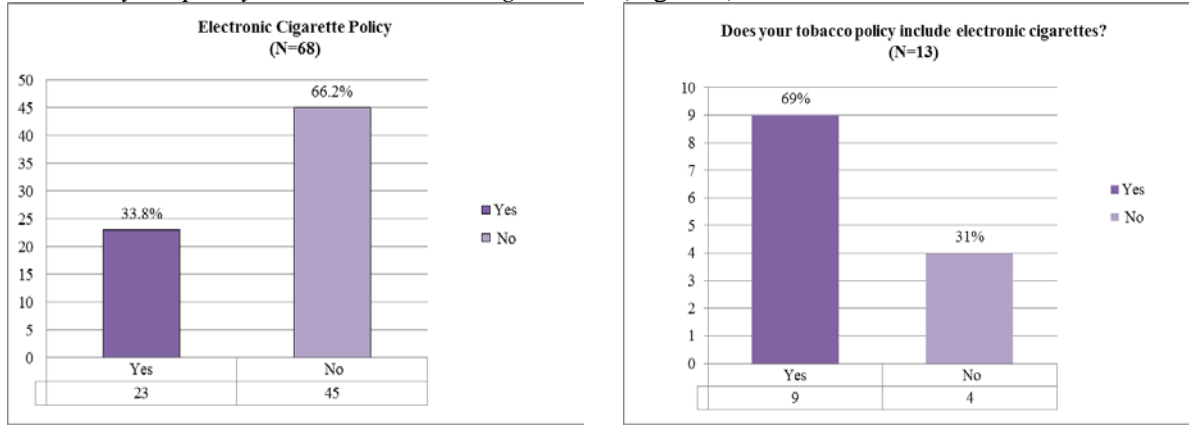


Figure 3a.

Figure 3b.

A majority of worksites (66%) do not have any regulation or guidelines in the current smoking and tobacco-use policy about electronic cigarettes (Figure 3a). Out of the 13 worksites that were surveyed last year and had a comprehensive tobacco policy, a majority (69%) of the worksites include electronic cigarettes in their current policy (Figure 3b).

*Does your workplace have signs indicating smoking or tobacco use is prohibited? (Figure 4).*

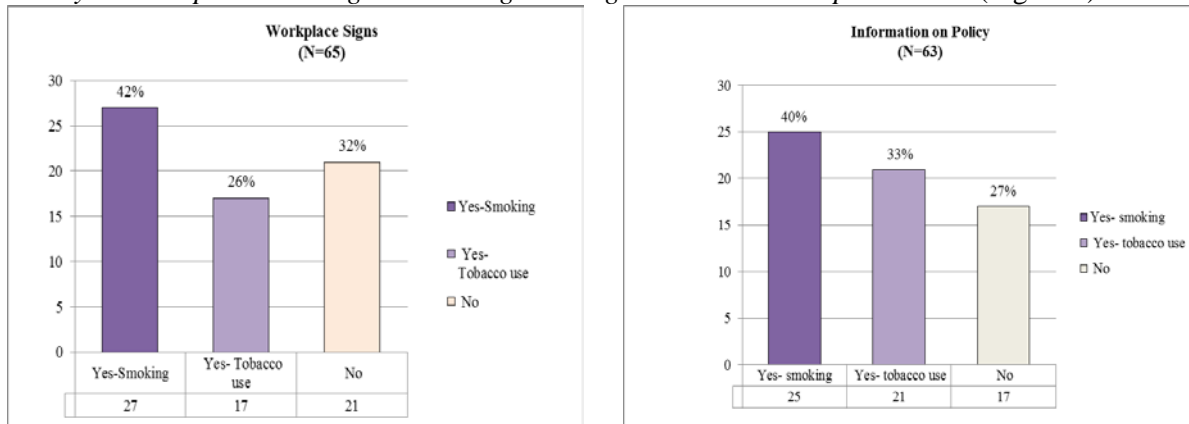


Figure 4.

Figure 5

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

Of the worksites reporting there was an existing smoking or tobacco policy in place, 73% of those has a process in place to inform customers, visitors, vendors, and employees of their policy (Figure 5). 68% of worksites have signs to indicate that smoking or tobacco use is prohibited (Figure 4).

Does your agency, business or organization prohibit smoking or tobacco use while in company-owned vehicles? (Figure 6)

Of employers, 28% 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).<sup>3</sup>

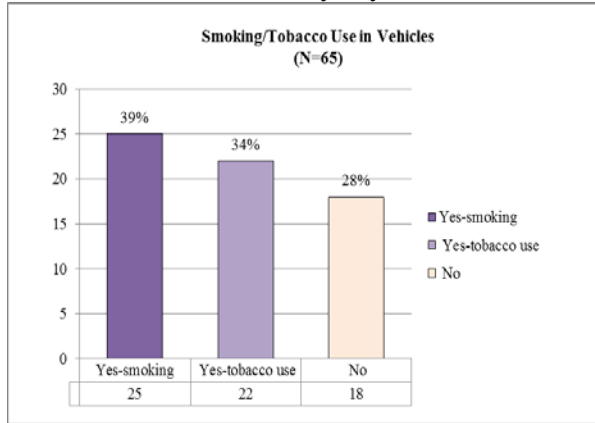


Figure 6.

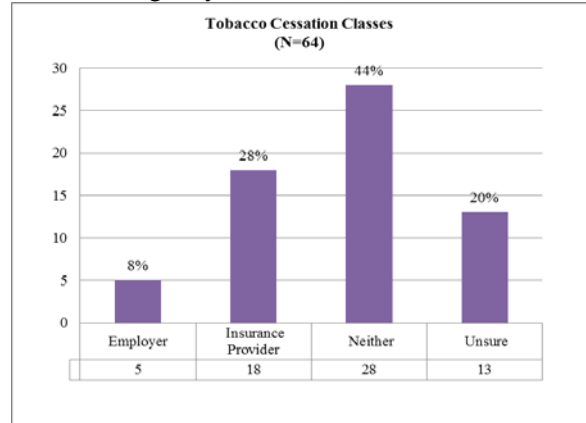
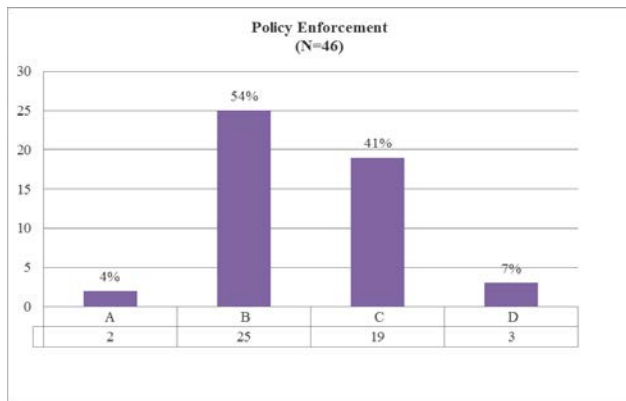


Figure 7.

Does your agency, business, or organization offer tobacco cessation classes through your employer or health insurance provider to support the policy in place? (Figure 7).

Of the employers who indicated their company/business/agency offered tobacco cessation support, 28% offered classes and support through their health insurance provider. 8% offered support within their company (Figure 7)

The respondents were asked: *How is your agency, business, or organization’s smoking or tobacco policy enforced?* (Figure 8).



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

Figure 8.

Of the worksites that already had an existing smoking or tobacco use policy when asked if the policy was enforced, 63% (Figure 8) stated the policy was enforced. Employee demerit and asking the violator to leave the premise was the most common form of enforcement. Other forms of enforcement that are common among worksites are asking violator to move to a designated area, if one existed, and verbal warnings.

## Conclusion

The survey which the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District conducted on tobacco use in large worksites in McLennan County yielded a response rate of 51% (N=81), revealing 87% (Figure 1) of these worksites already having an existing tobacco use policy. Only 19% 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/documents/ets_cars.pdf), accessed on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.