

## Government and Policy

# Smoking at indoor workplaces to be banned

By LAN TIAN (China Daily)  
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GUANGZHOU - Smoking at indoor workplaces and other public places is expected to become a thing of the past under a forthcoming tobacco-control regulation in the southern city of Guangzhou.

The standing committee of Guangzhou people's congress passed the draft regulation on Wednesday after reviewing it three times.

The draft regulation will be submitted for final approval to the standing committee of Guangdong people's congress, the provincial legislative body.

Smoking in public places such as hospitals, schools, gymnasiums, restaurants, libraries, shopping malls, bookstores and public transport vehicles, is banned in the draft regulation.

The regulation is "a great improvement and is in accordance with the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," Yao Rongbin, director of the Guangzhou Tobacco Control Association and former vice-mayor of the city, said on Wednesday.

The revision was made after many citizens and officials strongly suggested banning smoking at indoor workplaces, she said.

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"So, it will be in line with the interests of most people," Yao said.

The regulation has been drafted and revised since 2007. It is expected to be made public and take effect before November, when the 16th Asian Games will be held in Guangzhou, Yao said.

According to the draft, non-smoking indoor workplaces include offices, conference rooms, assembly halls, public corridors, elevators and dining rooms of government departments, enterprises and organizations, while smoking areas will be set up for smokers at indoor workplaces.

"I support the ban even though I'm a smoker, because smoking at workplaces pollutes the environment and affects the health of colleagues, especially female colleagues," said local resident Zhang Shaolin, 29.

"If someone smokes at my office, it will definitely affect my thinking process during software development," said

Zhang Peiyang, a local computer engineer.

The draft stipulates that selling tobacco to anyone younger than 18 is illegal. The seller should ask the buyer to present his or her identity card if the buyer's age is not evident.

On World No Tobacco Day, which falls on May 31 every year, selling tobacco is banned in the city.

The smoking rate of Guangzhou citizens is 18.6 percent, much lower than many other big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, according to a survey of Guangzhou Tobacco Control Association last year.

"People's bad habits cannot die overnight. But I think with the restriction of the law and reminders from friends, banning smoking in public places is not very difficult to achieve," Yao

reminders from friends, banning smoking in public places is not very difficult to achieve," Yao said.

Some 350 million people on the Chinese mainland are smokers. The population of passive smokers is more than 540 million, according to the Ministry of Health.

Governments at different levels have paid great attention to tobacco control in recent years. Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou have introduced tobacco-control regulation.

China began participating in the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2006, promising full implementation by 2011.

Zhang Suyong contributed to this story

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