New Jersey State Laws

Smoking Ban in Hookah Bars & Lounges

- In 2011, the NJ Office of Local Public Health issued “Administrative Advisory 2011-001” stating that the NJ Smokefree Air Act (NJSFAA) smoking exemptions are NOT applicable to hookah bars, and that non-tobacco shisha/smoking products are not to be smoked at hookah bars.

- NJSFAA permits “cigar bar and lounges” (includes hookah) only if they existed as of 12/31/04, have not changed in size or location, meet enclosure and ventilation requirements, etc. NJSA 26:3D-59; NJAC 8:6-3.1 et.seq., Rule Comment #101.

- 2007 NJ Department of Health Rules permit “tobacco retail establishment” (TRE) smoking waivers only for onsite product sampling, with purchased products to be consumed off-premises (“cash and carry”). Sales of other products must be “incidental”. See NJAC 8:6-1.2, response to comments #106-7.

- Municipal or county laws may further restrict smoking lounges and TREs.

Smoking ban in all college dormitories.

- Under the 2005 NJ Smokefree College Housing Act, all college owned or operated housing on and off-campus must be smokefree. See NJSA 26:3D-17. Some NJ colleges have 100% smokefree policies that cover outdoor campus areas.

Bans sale or giving of tobacco electronic smoking devices to people under age 19.

- See NJSA 2A:170-51.4.
- Your town may have a municipal law requiring a higher age of sale (age 21). Contact GASP, which tracks local laws, to see if your town requires age 21 tobacco.

Dangers Of Use and Exposure

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Like us on Facebook (FB link on front page). With your support, together we can make our world smokefree and tobacco-free!

About Us

Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP) is a 40+ year old nonprofit resource center dedicated to smokefree air and helping people to live tobacco-free and nicotine-free.

Our Tobacco Control Policy & Legal Resource Center supports policy initiatives by providing educational materials, technical assistance and presentations to policymakers, organizations, health personnel and the public.

GASP focuses on emerging issues in tobacco control, including the increasing rates of youth and young adults smoking hookah and electronic smoking devices (e-cigarettes), and the health concerns of using these products.

Need Help?

GASP is a leader on tobacco control. We can help educate you and your town on:

- Raising the age to 21 to be sold tobacco, e-cigarettes, hookah paraphernalia.
- Local licensing of retailers selling e-cigarette products, hookah paraphernalia.
- Requiring smokefree cars and parks in your town and making homes smokefree.

Want to quit tobacco? Go to GASP’s website www.njgasp.org/quit_tobacco.htm. NJ residents call NJ Quitline - free help at 1-866-NJ-STOPS.

DISCLAIMER: This brochure is for informational purposes only; it is not legal advice, and should not replace legal advice from your own attorney.
What is Hookah Smoking?
Hookah (shisha, goza, narghile) is a water pipe used to smoke maassel (flavored tobacco). Maassel is heated with charcoal, creating smoke that passes through an ornate water vessel and is inhaled via a hose.

Water pipes are often used communally, with several people sharing a single pipe. Some pipes have multiple hoses to facilitate group smoking. Otherwise, smokers pass the mouthpiece from one person to the next.

In the United States, commercial hookah smoking establishments, or hookah lounges, have become more common in recent years.

Is Hookah Smoking Harmful?
• Hookah smoke contains toxins that cause lung cancer and heart disease, and have adverse effects on pregnancies. (2005 World Health Organization WHO Advisory Note) It also impairs lung function and may cause Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

• Hookah smoke contains nicotine (the addictive component of tobacco), tobacco-related carcinogens, tar, carbon monoxide (CO) and heavy metals.

• Heat sources like charcoal or wood cinders release CO, heavy metals and carcinogens that may increase health risks. (BACCHUS Network White Paper)

• Non-tobacco herbal hookah smoking is also harmful: the inhalation of any burned matter causes damage to the lungs, whether or not it contains tobacco.

• Blood CO levels are 1.5 times higher in hookah smokers than in heavy cigarette smokers. Nonsmoker CO levels are 3 ppm versus 40-70 ppm for hookah smokers.

Hookah Use by Young Adults
2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey:
• 9.4% of high school students smoked hookah in 2014, vs. 5.2% in 2013. 2.5% of middle school students smoked hookah in 2014 vs. 1.1% in 2013.
• E-cigarette followed by hookah, were more commonly used than regular cigarettes.

2012 NJ Tobacco Youth Use Survey:
• 8.4% of high school students reported smoking hookah (was the 2nd most popular type of tobacco smoked).

2007 American Legacy Foundation Survey (ages 18-24):
• 42% believe hookah is less dangerous than cigarette smoking.
• 32% believe hookah is less addictive than cigarette smoking.

Social Setting, Lead to Other Tobacco use:
• Hookah smokers tend to be social smokers: smoke with friends in bars, cafes, etc.
• Early hookah use may lead to addiction and a transition to cigarette or other tobacco use, or electronic smoking device smoking.

Hookah Use Creates Hazardous Second and Third-Hand Smoke
• Secondhand hookah smoke (SHS) has the same disease risks associated with secondhand cigarette smoke. (WHO).

• There is no known safe exposure level of SHS, a Class A human carcinogen.

• SHS aggravates and increases chronic disease risks, such as asthma, allergies, lung cancer, pneumonia, chronic bronchitis, heart disease, emphysema and diabetes. SHS increases the risk of miscarriage.

• SHS levels in hookah lounges can be more than twice that in smoke-filled bars.

• Hookah smoking at home produces SHS that enters adjoining rooms, hallways, and other apartments by seeping through lighting fixtures, wall cracks, shared ventilation, plumbing and doors.

• Third-hand smoke is residual SHS that is embedded into upholstery, rugs, walls and other surfaces. Studies indicate that third-hand smoke may be more dangerous than SHS, since third-hand smoke does not dissipate and continuously emits toxins.

Risk of Infection & Gum Disease
• Hookah pipes are warm, moist, non-sterile, and communally shared: a growth medium for germs. 17% of tuberculosis cases in eastern Mediterranean areas are attributed to water pipe smoking. Hookah sharing can also transmit herpes, hepatitis and other viruses and bacteria. Personal or disposable mouthpieces or hoses attached to the hookah do not eliminate the risk of transmitting disease.

• Hookah use increases risk of periodontal disease (gum, bone) five-fold.