

An R-rating for smoking: Why it's reasonable, effective, and *inevitable*.

Smoking appeared in 77% of movies rated PG-13 over the last five years. Research shows movies are the biggest pro-smoking influence on children today, more powerful than traditional tobacco advertising. 390,000 kids every year start smoking because of exposure to smoking on screen; as adults 100,000 of them will die from it. A common-sense change to Hollywood's rating system can cut this death toll by 60% or more.

WHY IT'S TIME TO RATE SMOKING "R":

Research published last June in one of the world's leading medical journals confirms a decade of findings: smoking in movies recruits over half of all new teenage smokers in the United States.

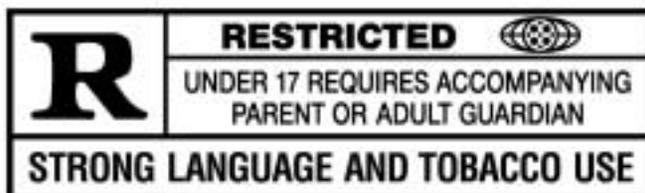
The effect of movie smoking on kids is clear and direct: the more they see, the more likely they are to start smoking. The teens most powerfully influenced are the children of non-smoking parents.

The good news: the less smoking teens see in the movies, the less likely they are to light that first cigarette.

Because kids get 62% of their exposure to movie smoking from G, PG, and PG-13 movies, rating smoking "R" will reduce smoking rates proportionally.

Of the 390,000 kids each year who now start smoking because of what they see on screen, 100,000 a year will eventually die from tobacco-related disease.

Averting 62% of those deaths a year is equal to ending all U.S. deaths from drunk driving, AIDS, violent crime and illegal drugs. Worth doing? Well, yes.



"R" FOR RESPONSIBLE. The MPAA claims the First Amendment is the reason it won't rate smoking "R." But it R-rates offensive but perfectly legal language now. Surely it doesn't consider its own age-classification system censorship? After all, the First Amendment prohibits the government from banning movies, not voluntary, responsible rating choices by the studio-controlled MPAA.

HOLLYWOOD CAN DO IT TOMORROW.

It's no stretch to make the "R" cover smoking. It already covers other legal activities, while giving parents "cautionary advance warning," says the MPAA.

When it rates 4-letter words "R," for example, the MPAA is distinguishing between talk appropriate for kids and speech intended for adult audiences.

It doesn't censor. It age-classifies.

Treat smoking the same way. If a studio decides it's vital for a character to smoke, it can accept an "R" rating just as it does now for cursing or removing a bra—two legal activities that kill nobody at all.

That's no bar to creativity. Studios would still be free to make all the smoking films they want. Many smoking films are already rated "R" for other reasons.

Kids could still see them, too, if their parents take them—that's what an "R" rating means. Real progress is when "R" takes smoking out of the G, PG and PG-13 films that kids are exposed to most.

In fact, only an "R" can keep smoking out of new youth-rated movies, cut teen smoking rates, and save 62,000 lives a year.

A MILLION TOBACCO DEATHS LATE...

The studios have been stalling public health groups on this issue for more than a decade. "Dialogue" has only produced more on-screen smoking, more real-life addiction, billions for tobacco companies.

That's why medical professionals, including L.A. County's own Department of Health Services, now join socially-responsible shareholders and thousands of young people across the country to demand that smoking be rated "R."

Smoking on screen poses the single greatest public health danger to America's children. Chief executives of the seven major studios and their corporate parents could reduce the danger by 60% or more tomorrow.

The "R" is inevitable. Why not now?

Learn more about the "R" at SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu



**SMOKE
FREE
MOVIES**