

Executive Summary:

TOBACCO USE; OPINIONS ON HARM AND SMOKING PROHIBITIONS

- Nearly all adult San Diegans consider tobacco use to be harmful and most (56%) regard it as extremely harmful. Tobacco users themselves are substantially less inclined to agree with that assessment, as only 20% see it as extremely harmful.
- Compared to the direct harm caused by tobacco use, second hand smoke is generally perceived to be less harmful. Still, most residents describe second hand smoke as very or extremely harmful. However, the average tobacco user does not believe smoking poses more than a minor threat to those in their proximity.
- Nine percent of San Diego residents now use tobacco products on a regular basis, but nearly one-third have regularly used tobacco at some time in their lives.
- Tobacco use usually begins at a young age: two-thirds started the habit before they turned 18 and before it was legal for them to purchase tobacco products. An additional 23% started using between the ages of 18 and 20 before the legal age to purchase and consume alcohol.
- Seventy-two percent of those who regularly used tobacco at one time have successfully quit. On the other hand, 56% of current users have tried to kick their habit but failed.
- The results clearly suggest that the more harmful one perceives tobacco and/or second hand smoke to be, the less likely one is to take up tobacco. Women and younger adults are less likely to have ever used tobacco, but adults with family members who use tobacco are more likely to have used tobacco themselves (although they also quit at a high rate).
- Most residents think smoking should be curtailed with legal restraints. The perceived harm that tobacco causes is a chief driver of support for more restrictions on smoking. Smokers generally frown on more restrictions, except when minors are involved.
- More than half think smoking should not be permitted in front of one's workplace.
- More than half of say it should be illegal to smoke in outdoor public places owned by the City.

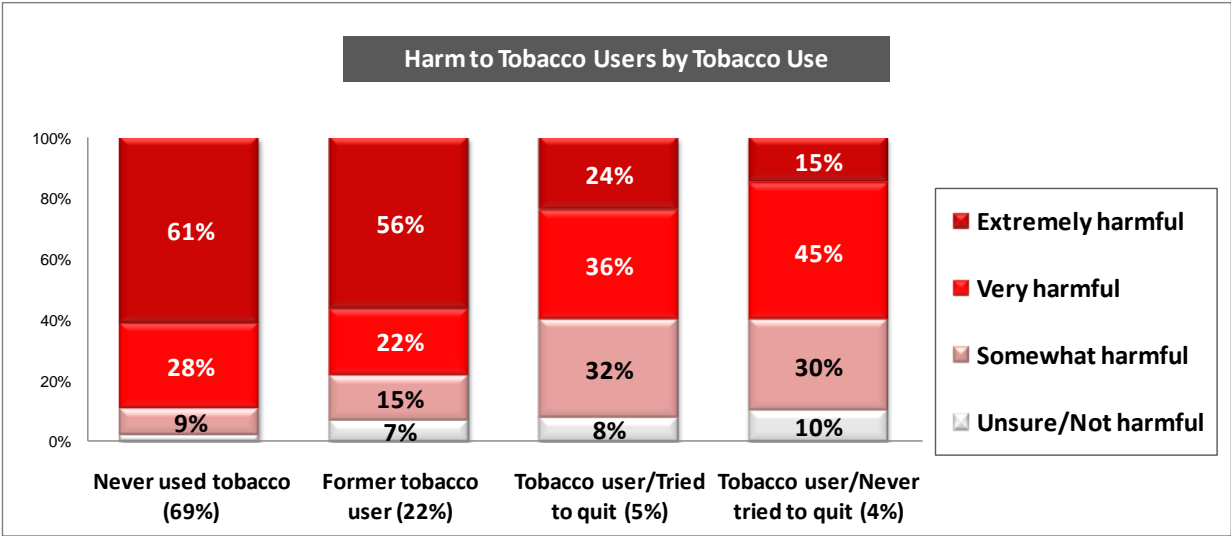
- Seventy-one percent say it should be illegal to drive in a car with a minor while smoking.
- However, residents draw the line at smoking in private. Sixty-two percent say smoking inside one's private condo or apartment where there is a common wall should be permitted. Even most non-smokers do not want to outlaw smoking in private condos.

Findings

OPINIONS REGARDING TOBACCO USE

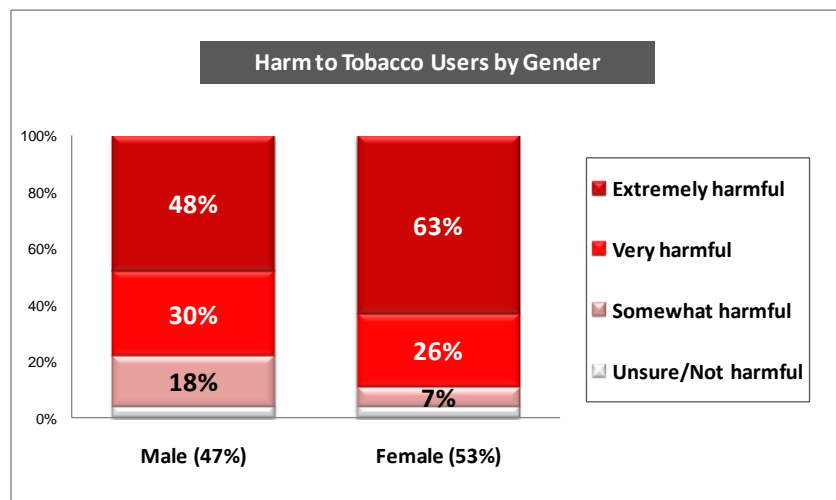
There is no longer much disagreement: adult San Diegans clearly believe that using tobacco products harms the users. Eighty-three percent voice a belief that tobacco use is *extremely* or *very* harmful. The majority of that opinion is intense, as 56% believe tobacco usage to be extremely harmful. Only 12% say it is somewhat harmful and a mere 2% downplay the harm or feel tobacco is not harmful at all.

As one might assume, tobacco users themselves tend to deviate from the prevailing attitude. Although 61% of those who never used tobacco products say that using those products is extremely harmful, only 24% of those who are current tobacco users say the harm is extreme. And although most of them do agree that tobacco is at least very harmful to the user, a large minority (40%) rate the affect as only somewhat harmful or less. What is very interesting is that, as the chart shows, the opinions registered by former tobacco users (those who used it regularly but then quit) are basically in line with those who never started the habit at all. Quitters are more than twice as likely as current users to fall into the category that tags tobacco as extremely harmful. Did quitters come to this conclusion and then stop using tobacco products? If so, this strongly suggests that, in getting users to really kick the habit, it is not enough to get them to believe it is only very harmful; they must come to believe it is extremely harmful before they will quit. This seems logical, but it could also be that former tobacco users saw the extreme harm in using cigarettes and other tobacco products only *after* they quit the habit. In this case, the act of quitting leads to a change in opinion, instead of the other way around. It is beyond the scope of this study to answer that question.



But the real story here might be how many folks who smoke or use tobacco products acknowledge that those products are extremely harmful to them, yet still continue using them. This would seem to be further proof of tobacco’s highly addictive quality. If 60% believe what they are doing to themselves is at least very harmful and – even more to the point -- 23% believe it to be extremely harmful, these folks must be categorized as either suicidal or utterly addicted to the product.

The survey also shows that women attribute far more harm to tobacco than men do. Deep analysis shows that this goes beyond the fact that more men use tobacco than women do. Even women users are more inclined to rate that use as harmful to themselves. Perhaps it’s the age-old “tough guy” posturing that leads to men ignoring risk, or perhaps men are more skeptical than women. In any event, the harm tobacco causes is another fault line in the gender terrain.



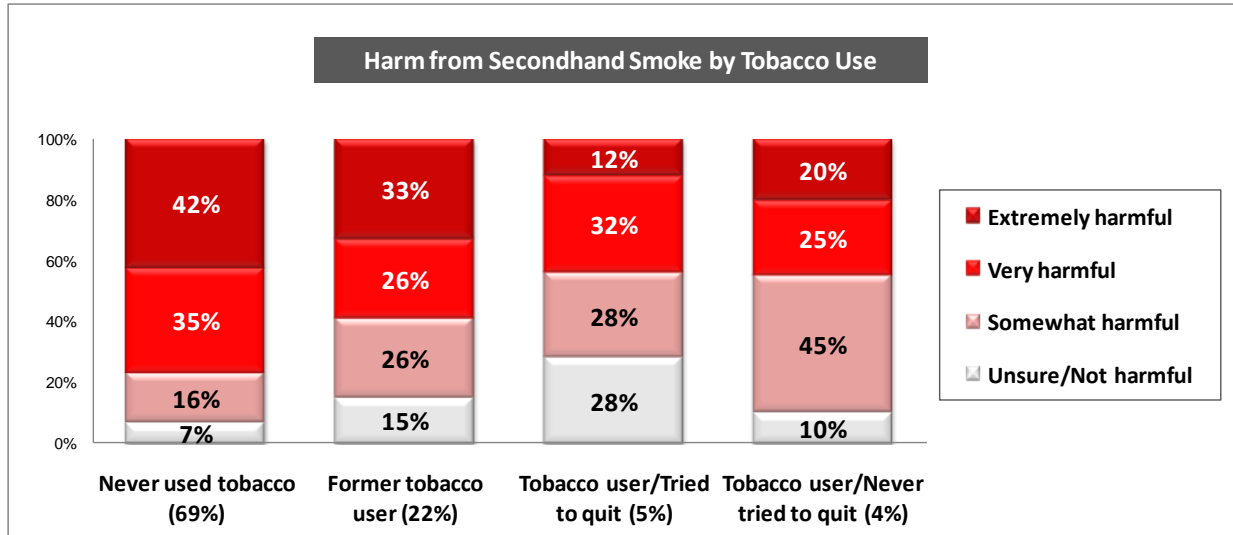
There is a small relationship between education and belief in severely harmful effects of tobacco on the user. What we find is that only about one half of those who have less than a college degree feel tobacco causes extreme harm. Among those who have earned a degree or an advanced degree, 64% share that sentiment. This relationship could be culturally-based or it may be that higher education itself tends to solidify the idea that tobacco products are bad.

SECONDHAND SMOKE

Opinions on the harm caused by repeated exposure to secondhand smoke are less intense and there is less consensus on this point. Although 70% do believe secondhand smoke is *extremely* or *very* harmful to those around the smoker, only 38% say it is *extremely* harmful. On the other side of the scale, 10% basically question the idea of secondhand smoke presenting any harm to non-smokers.

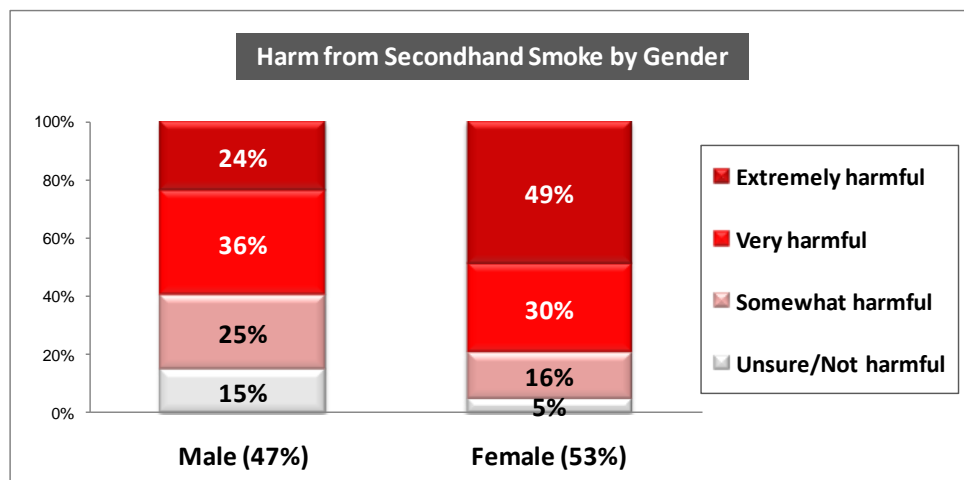
Again, a person’s gender and whether one smokes or not play the biggest roles in determining whether someone sees secondhand smoke as perhaps just a nuisance or as a serious health threat. Although former tobacco users are a little more equivocal than those who have never touched tobacco, both groups generally tend toward the viewpoint that secondhand smoke is very or extremely bad for people. But the views of smokers, both those who have tried to quit and those who have not are wide-ranging. Many feel there is no problem at all and most do not feel secondhand

smoke rises to the level of being very harmful. The average tobacco user does not feel smokers pose a serious threat to those around them.



On the other hand, 15% of current tobacco users believe exposure to secondhand smoke poses an extreme health hazard. Although perhaps an imaginative stretch, it may be that these tobacco users are actually non-smokers who have chosen a smokeless nicotine delivery system specifically because they believe secondhand smoke is so harmful. However, in cases where these really are smokers, it becomes clear that smoking is an incredibly addictive behavior who do believe that secondhand smoke causes extreme harm.

Women are again the vanguard of sensitivity here, as nearly half see extreme harm; that’s twice the percentage among males. Again, the difference here is only somewhat attributable to a higher incidence of smoking among men. The data show that even female tobacco users are more inclined to believe secondhand smoke is extremely harmful. Since women who do use tobacco products are presumably much more likely to smoke cigarettes (as opposed to “dipping” or “chewing”), this presents an interesting paradox where female smokers are more likely than men to be conflicted over secondhand smoke.



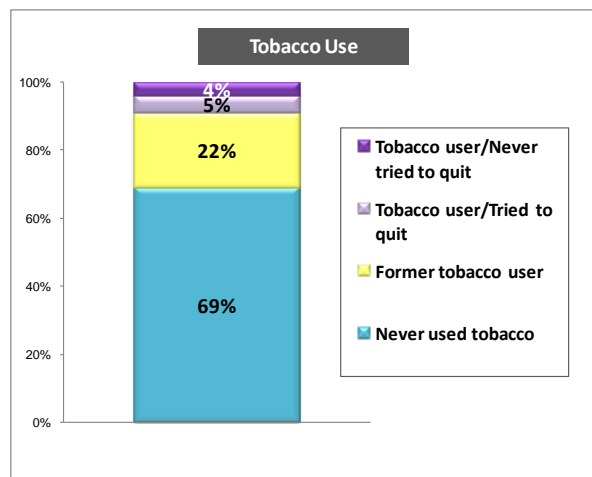
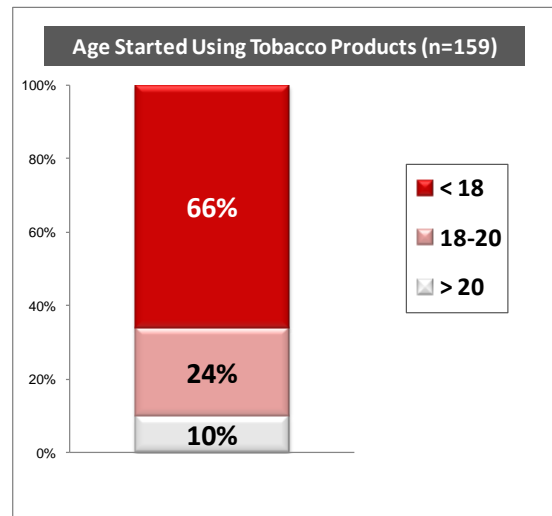
The data reveal three other significant relationships related to opinions on the harm caused by secondhand smoke. First, north city residents are less likely to perceive the effects as extremely harmful. This might partly be a product of ethnicity, because we also find that Hispanics, who reside in larger numbers in the portion of the City south of Interstate 8, are far more inclined to rate secondhand smoke as extremely harmful. Fifty-five percent of Hispanics rate secondhand smoke as that bad; only 36% of non-Hispanics agree. Finally, we find that ideology plays a role. It is interesting, however, that neither liberals nor conservatives tend to outdo each other when it comes to seeing harm in secondhand smoke. It is the moderates – those who are smack dab in between the left and the right sides of the spectrum—who are more skeptical of the prevailing view that secondhand smoke is at least very harmful. Half of those in the middle of the ideological spectrum say it is either only somewhat harmful or not a problem at all.

USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Almost one-third (31%) of the population reports that they currently use or have used some form of tobacco on a regular basis. Tobacco use generally starts young: although the law states one must be 18 years old to purchase tobacco products, two-thirds say they started smoking as minors. The legal restriction on purchasing tobacco is clearly not a deterrent. Twenty-four percent started to use tobacco between the ages of 18 and 20, prior to the legal age to consume and purchase alcohol.

Nine percent of San Diego residents currently use tobacco products on a regular basis. Seventy-two percent of those who regularly used tobacco at one time do not currently use it. Of those who are currently using tobacco products, 75% report that they tried to quit but were unsuccessful. Clearly, this can be a difficult habit to kick although the desire to do so is there.

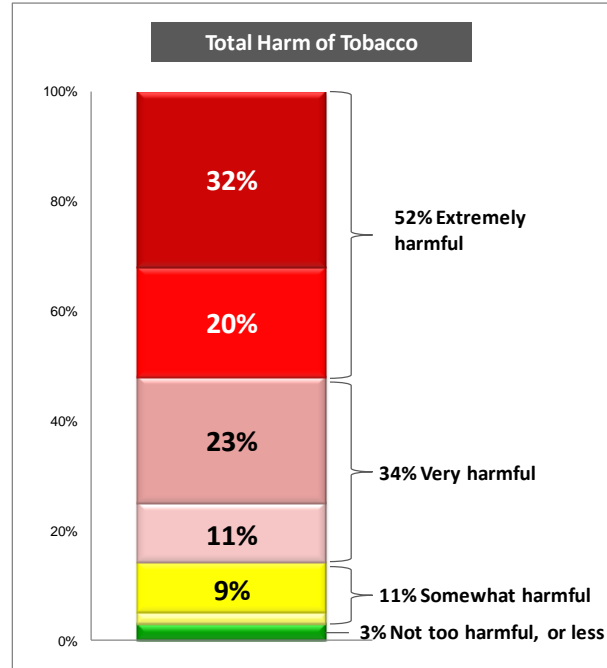
One way of looking at tobacco use is to view it as a spectrum. At one extreme are people who have never used tobacco and at the other are tobacco users who have never tried to quit; what we might call “hard core” users. In between are former tobacco users who have quit successfully and current tobacco users who have tried to quit unsuccessfully. By analyzing tobacco use along a spectrum – rather than a user/non-user dichotomy - we can observe the various proximities to



tobacco use.

Opinions about the overall harm tobacco causes drive one's relationship to tobacco. "Overall harm" in this case is calculated by combining a respondent's opinion about how harmful tobacco use is to the user with how harmful the respondent perceives secondhand smoke to be. This is a more useful way of characterizing the effects of tobacco use, as it incorporates opinions on the degree to which someone is choosing self harm along with the degree to which someone is choosing to harm those around them.

More than three-quarters of adults who generally view tobacco as extremely or very harmful (whether to the smoker or to others around them) have never used it, whereas 35% who say it is not too harmful or not harmful at all have never smoked. For anti-smoking campaigners, the message is clear: convince people that tobacco is very or extremely harmful. Perceiving tobacco as only *somewhat harmful* is not enough to substantially cut the impulse to try tobacco and it is not enough to get users to stop.



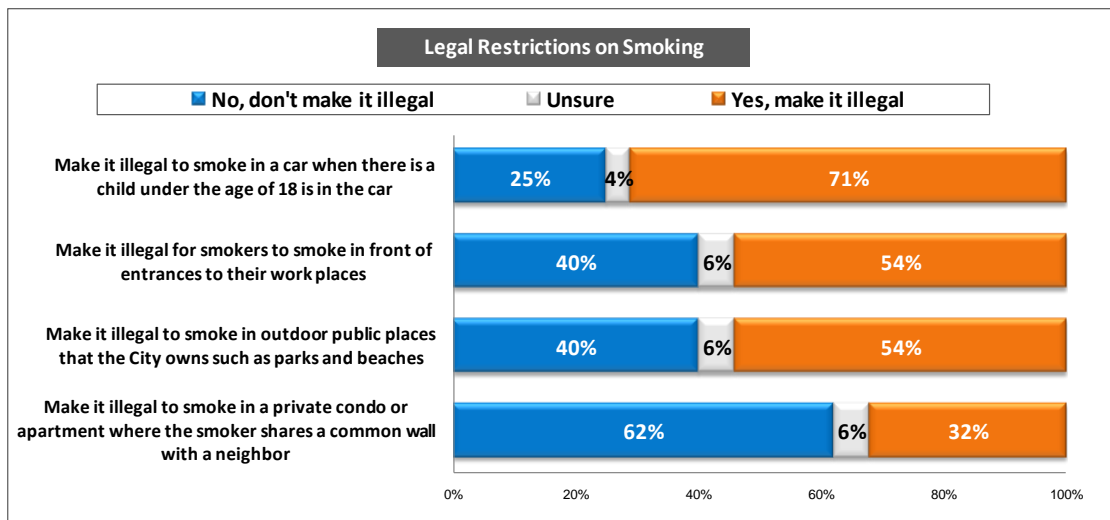
Women are less likely to use tobacco than men and they are less likely to have ever tried tobacco: 76% of women report that they have never been regular users whereas the figure is 62% for men. Part of this is clearly due to the fact, discussed above, that women tend to see tobacco as more harmful. Although not within the scope of this study, it is important to consider that the gender gap might also be partially due to market factors. Tobacco products other than cigarettes, such as cigars and chewing tobacco, are much more commonly used by and marketed to men, capitalizing on the more masculine image traditionally associated with such kinds of tobacco.

Does growing up around smokers cause you to smoke? Well, the survey results cannot go that far, but there is certainly evidence that tobacco use increases when family members smoke. Those with family members who are past or current tobacco users are more likely to use tobacco. Only 17% of adults without a tobacco-using family member have used tobacco themselves, but 36% of those who have tobacco in the family have used tobacco. Tobacco use is not inevitable based on familial use, but it certainly makes it more likely.

Younger adults are more likely to never have used tobacco and, conversely, the older one is the more likely it is that they are a former tobacco user. This suggests recent anti-tobacco campaigns may have had an impact, but this could also be an illusion. Less usage among younger adults may actually be the result of them having not had as much time as older residents to try tobacco and acquire the habit. Also, as we described in the previous paragraph, they may have fewer siblings and family members to introduce them to tobacco. Further, the older one is the more opportunity there is to quit using. So the relationship we are seeing here may be related to time rather than anti-smoking campaigns.

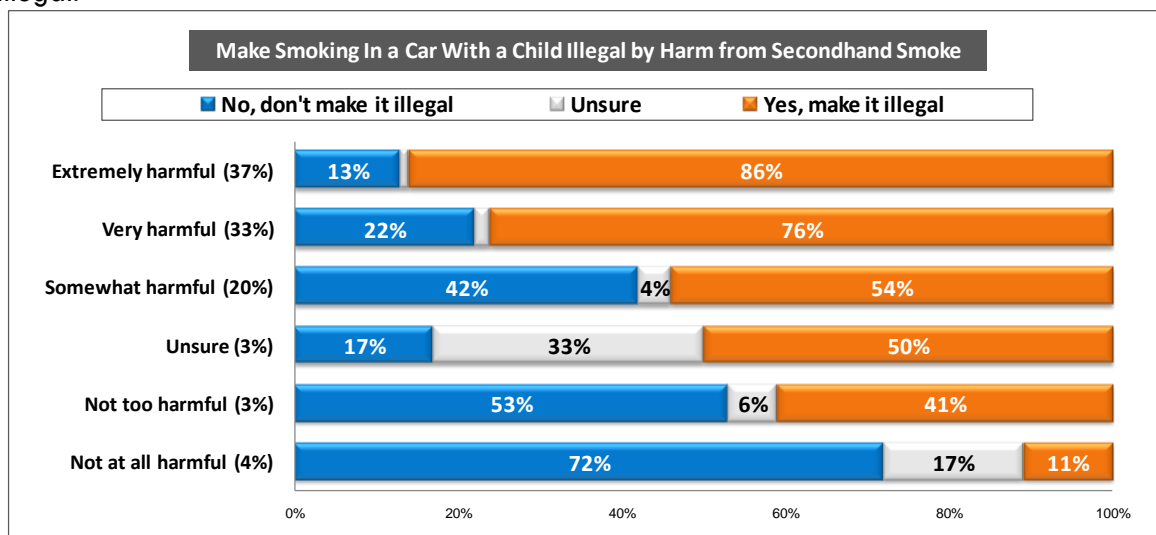
SMOKING POLICY

A clear majority of adults think smoking ought to be curtailed by legal prohibition. Generally speaking, residents express support for legal restrictions on smoking in public and smoking that affects another person. But when private behavior is involved, even if it might infringe on another individual, restrictions lose support.



SMOKING IN A CAR WITH A MINOR CHILD

Seventy-one percent of the public says it should be illegal to smoke while driving in the car containing a child. The combined harm of smoking naturally plays a role in one's opinion about driving with a minor in a car while smoking. Eighty-six percent who hold an extreme opinion about tobacco harm say it should be illegal, whereas 20% of those who think it only *somewhat* harmful or less say it should be illegal.



There are also cultural characteristics in play. Hispanics are unified in their desire to make smoking in a car with a minor child against the law: 87% say so compared with 67% of the rest of the public. The difference is even starker when looking specifically at Spanish speaking Hispanics: 96% say it should be illegal to smoke in the car with a minor.

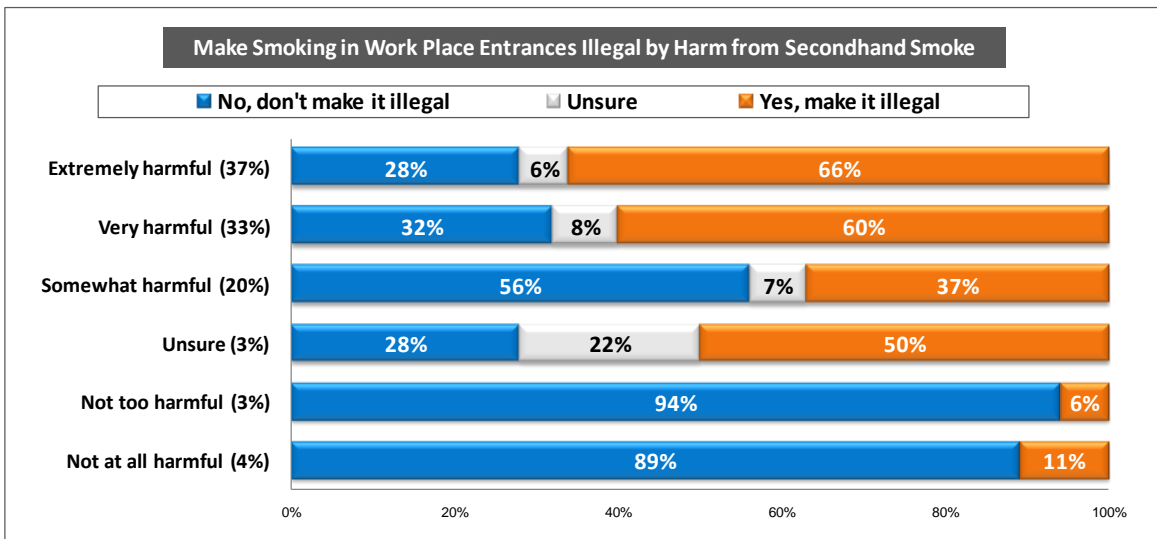
SMOKING IN FRONT OF ONE'S WORKPLACE

Fifty-four percent of adults think it should be illegal to smoke in front of workplace entrances. Residents in the South City (south of Interstate 8) are more likely to say smoking outside the workplace should be permitted. Forty-five percent of South City residents think it should be legal to smoke outside one's workplace compared with 34% among residents of the North City (north of Interstate 8.) There are more households in the South City with combined incomes of \$40,000 a year or less: 78% in this income bracket reside south of Interstate 8. Along these lines, adults in higher income households are more likely to say smoking outside the workplace should be illegal. These two factors combined suggest that there is a white-collar/blue-collar distinction at play. The type of workplace and/or industry is related to whether employees think their smoking co-workers should be allowed to smoke outside. The propriety of smoking outside a plant or an auto repair shop is not seen in the same light as smoking outside a bank or a law firm.

Obviously, perceptions about the harm caused by secondhand smoke drive opinions about the legality of smoking outside one's workplace. This is one reason why such prohibitions have become more popular in recent years. Adults who say secondhand smoke is *extremely* or *very* harmful are more likely to say it should be illegal to smoke outside work; 64% of them say it should be illegal. However, there is a marked decrease regarding the legality when opinions about secondhand smoke is only thought to be somewhat harmful, only 37% of these folks say smoking in front of the workplace should be illegal. The desire for prohibition drops from there yet again.

Curiously, adults with less than a high school education are more likely to say that it should be illegal to smoke in front of one's workplace.

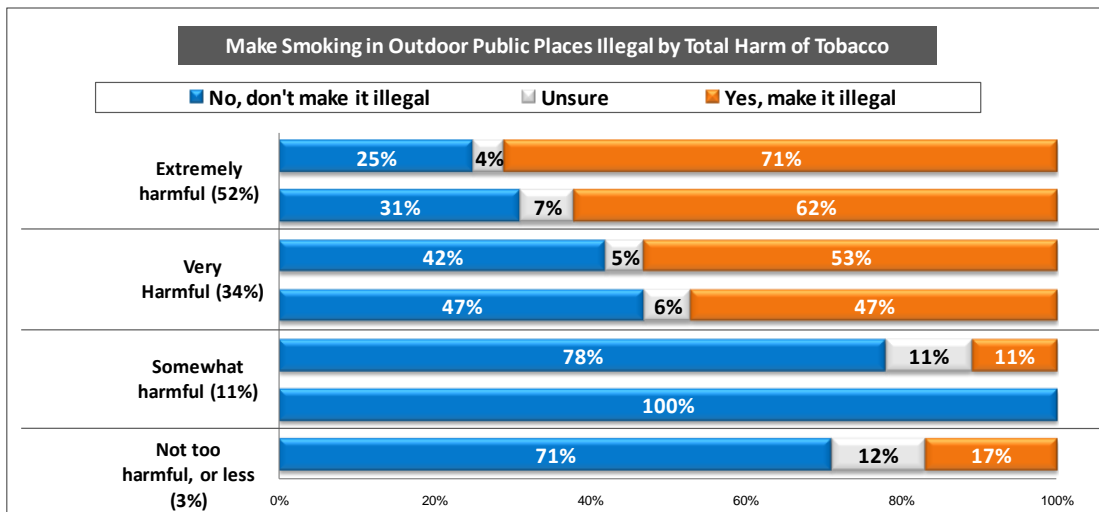
Finally adults who categorize themselves as mixed race (something other than white, Hispanic, African-American or Asian) are more likely to say smoking outside the workplace should be illegal.



SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

Fifty-four percent of adults say it should be illegal to smoke in outdoor public places that are owned by the City of San Diego.

The strength of one's opinion regarding the combined harm of smoking (both tobacco use and secondhand smoke) drives support for a smoking ban in public places. Seventy-one percent of those who think it is extremely harmful say it should be illegal to smoke in public places whereas 11% of those who think it is only *somewhat* harmful say it should be illegal.



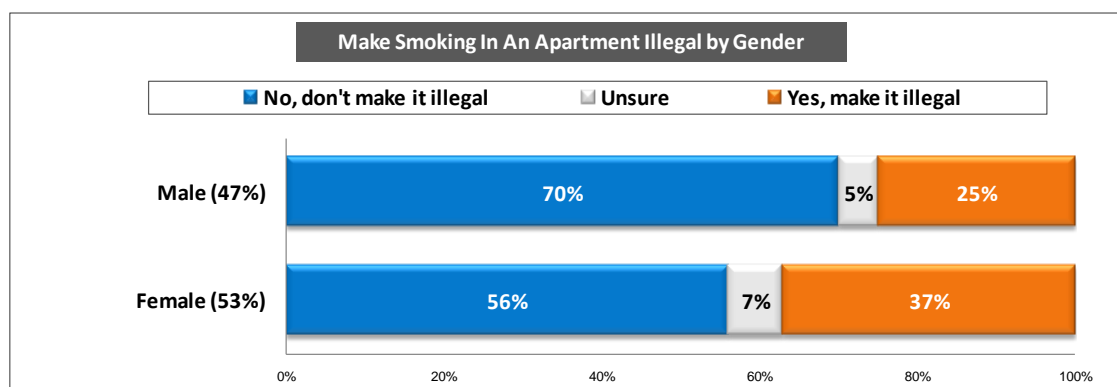
African-Americans are more likely to say it should not be illegal. Fifty-five percent are against a prohibition compared with 39% of adults who are not African-Americans. This might be because African-Americans may use public places more (or less) than other ethnicities, although such a conclusion is beyond the scope of this survey.

SMOKING IN PRIVATE PROPERTY WITH A COMMON WALL

Opinion switches directions when it comes to smoking within the confines of private property. Sixty-two percent say it should not be illegal to smoke inside a private condo or apartment that shares a common wall with a neighbor.

Interestingly, the only demographic sub-group among whom a majority want to make it illegal are Spanish-speaking Hispanics. More than three-quarters (76%) say it should be illegal to smoke inside a private residence. However, this is only 4% of the population and such an outlier could be influenced by language issues. Also worth considering is that it could be related to the above finding that Hispanics are more intense about prohibiting smoking in a car with a minor child, as they may perceive a home as having children in it.

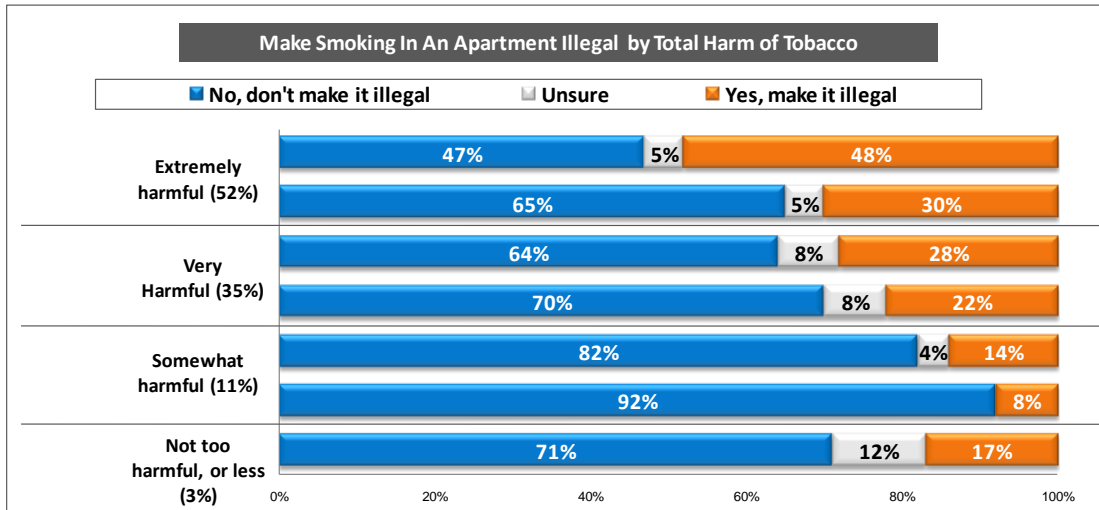
Women are less opposed to prohibiting smoking inside a private condo or apartment. However, a majority of both genders still do not support legal restrictions: 70% of men say that it should not be illegal whereas 56% of women say it should not.



Whites are more likely to say that it should be illegal to smoke inside private property, but again, a majority of whites do not favor prohibiting it.

The higher one's household income, the more likely they are to say that it should be legal to smoke in one's condo. Almost three-quarters of adults living in households with an income over \$80K a year say it should not be illegal whereas 56% of households with an income under \$40K say it should not. This could be related to proximity issues: those with more income tend to have larger houses and are not as close to or as affected by a neighbor who smokes.

The harm factor strongly affects one's opinion about smoking inside private property. Those with the most severe opinion (tobacco use is *extremely* harmful) are more likely to say that it should be illegal to smoke in one's residence. Although a majority thinks it should not be outlawed, 48% of these folks say that smoking in a private condo or apartment should be illegal. We see a dramatic drop when overall harm is considered to be slightly less severe: the percentage drops down to 30% who say it should be illegal.



ABOUT THE SDI/COMPETITIVE EDGE RESEARCH

The September survey was carried out from September 12th to September 14th, 2008 and includes 520 randomly selected adult respondents within the City of San Diego.

This survey was conducted by Competitive Edge Research & Communication (CERC) in conjunction with the San Diego Institute for Policy Research (SDI). SDI provided CERC with background information on the issues contained in the questionnaire and both entities discussed the topics in order to produce an effective questionnaire. Final responsibility for all questions and the data collection presented herein rests with CERC.

The interviewing was conducted in English and Spanish from CERC's San Diego facility. Professional interviewers were trained specifically for this project. The duration of the average interview was Four minutes and fifty-nine seconds. The random digit dial sample was provided by Scientific Telephone Samples of Foothill Ranch, CA. The percentages for age were mathematically adjusted to bring them in line with the proportions found in the U.S. Census.

SAMPLING ERROR

According to statistical theory, the confidence level associated with a sample of this type is such that, with a question where the respondents answer 50% "yes" and 50% "no," 95% of the time the results are within plus or minus $\pm 4.4\%$ of the *true value in the city*, where true value refers to the results obtained if it were possible to interview every possible qualified respondent. The degree of error is reduced when responses have larger (e.g. 60%-40%, 70%-30%) percentage differences.

In addition to error introduced by sampling variability, there are many other possible sources of bias such as how a question is worded, the question sequence, or individual interviewer techniques. Competitive Edge does everything in its power to minimize these potential sources of bias.

A survey of this type is a good measure of current attitudes that may change over time. This survey should not necessarily serve as an unqualified predictor of events, but as an indicator to the situation in late September 2008.

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

The San Diego Institute for Policy Research (SDI) is a non-partisan organization whose goal is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector throughout San Diego County. Established in 2006, SDI produces high quality policy research papers, economic bulletins, public opinion polls and major events and symposiums to help generate debate and discussion amongst San Diego's decision makers and citizens alike.

ABOUT COMPETITIVE EDGE RESEARCH & COMMUNICATION

Competitive Edge Research & Communication is San Diego County's premier polling firm. Established in 1987, the firm provides insight and strategic advice to clients across the state and across the country. Among its many endeavors, the firm conducts its annual Super Bowl poll to determine the big game's effect on the host city.