

Time to stub out smoking in T.F. bars

- [Story](#)
- [Discussion](#)

Posted: Thursday, December 10, 2009 2:00 am | [\(3\) Comments](#)

Should Twin Falls ban smoking in bars? That's a no-brainer. Yes, and the sooner the better. The Twin Falls City Council is in the preliminary stages of deciding whether to proscribe smoking in bars and private clubs, as Moscow did in August. First, second and third offenses are punishable with fines of \$10, \$25 and \$50, respectively, in the northern Idaho city.

Secondhand smoke kills 200 Idahoans a year, according to the American Lung Association, and costs Idaho \$319 million in direct health care costs. That works out to \$542 per household.

And the toll on bartenders, waiters and waitresses? Nonsmokers who work around smokers double their risk of getting cancer. And food service workers are half again as likely to die of lung cancer, largely because of second-hand smoke.

A poll taken in the Boise-area last year, commissioned by a coalition of anti-smoking groups, found 83 percent of respondents — and 57 percent of smokers — said the rights of consumers and employees to breathe clean air is more important than the rights of smokers. Thirty-seven percent of respondents reported they'd be more likely to go to a smoke-free bar; only 10 percent would be less likely.

The science on secondhand smoke is settled and public opinion is in favor of smoke-free bars. SmokeFree Idaho, an anti-smoking group, hopes that if enough Idaho cities pass ordinances forbidding smoking in bars, the Legislature will eventually follow suit.

That can't happen soon enough.