



Illinois Smoking Ban Takes Effect on New Years Eve

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

No smoking after midnight as Illinois' new smoking ban begins

Chicago, IL - At one minute past midnight tonight, smokers in Illinois will no longer be able to light up in their favorite establishments - including bars.

Illinois passed a no-smoking law this year that goes into effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. Smoking will be banned in most public places including restaurants, bars, bowling alleys and casinos. Smokers will be required to smoke go outside at a distance of at least 15 feet from entrances, windows or exits at bar and restaurants to light up.

Businesses will also be required to post "No Smoking" signs, remove ashtrays and report customers who refuse to comply with the ban to police as of 12:01 a.m. Tuesday.

"This is a new day in Chicago and I'm happy about it," Chicago's Health Czar Terry Mason told Fox Chicago.

The CDC estimates 3,400 non-smokers lose their lives to lung cancer every year. Another 69,000 die from heart disease. Based on the experience in 22 other states, the ban is expected to result in about 300,000 Illinois smokers quitting the practice.

Business owners will be responsible for enforcement of the no-smoking ordinance and patrons can report businesses not complying with the new ordinance by calling 3-1-1. Restaurant and bar owners will be fined only after two warning letters have been mailed post complaints and after a third complaint warrants a visit by an inspector. Upon the third warning, business owners could face fines from \$250 to \$2,500 per violation.

Some bar owners are concerned that since the ban is to be implemented from midnight on Monday, New Year revelers may not take the sudden change too kindly and implementing the ban may be practically impossible at that time.

Minibar | Winebar and Big Chicks are among several gay bars in Chicago that have offered a smoke-free environment for over a year.

Illinois is the 23rd state to pass a broad ban on indoor smoking.