



**Ohio Department of Health**  
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Columbus, Ohio 43215  
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*Ted Strickland, Governor*  
*Anne R. Harnish, Acting Director*

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# N E W S

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Office of Public Affairs • (614) 644-8562  
Jay Carey, Director

For Immediate Release  
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## **ODH BEGINS FORMAL RULE-MAKING PROCESS FOR INDOOR SMOKING BAN**

*Public hearing; JCARR meeting to follow*

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) today began the formal process of adopting enforcement rules for Ohio’s new indoor smoking ban. Draft rules were filed with the secretary of state and the Legislative Service Commission, triggering a 65-day process that provides for public comments, a public hearing and a final hearing before the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR).

ODH has sought to craft rules that are within the parameters of the law 58 percent of Ohio voters approved on Election Day while taking into account comments from nearly 4,000 Ohioans and members of ODH’s smoking ban advisory committee.

“Public input has been, and remains, essential to this important process,” said ODH Acting Director Anne R. Harnish. “While we cannot adopt every recommendation we receive, we consider them all seriously as we evaluate whether proposed changes comply with the law Ohio’s voters overwhelmingly approved.”

Ohioans can view the proposed rules online at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/rules/pending.aspx> or request a copy by contacting Kaye Norton via mail (Ohio Department of Health, 246 N. High St., Columbus, OH 43215); by phone (614-466-4882) or by e-mail ([kaye.norton@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:kaye.norton@odh.ohio.gov)).

A public hearing will be held at 10 a.m. Feb. 27 in the auditorium of the William Green Building, 30 W. Spring St. in Columbus. Interested parties will be afforded the opportunity to testify and provide their comments about the indoor smoking ban. Pre-register by contacting Norton (see contact information above). Written comments may be mailed to the above address or faxed to 614-728-7813 before 9 a.m. Feb. 27.

Ohio’s indoor smoking ban took effect Dec. 7 and although ODH cannot levy fines until the rules are adopted businesses must do three things to comply: prohibit smoking; remove ashtrays; and post no-smoking signs with the toll-free enforcement number, 1-866-559-OHIO (6446). Since the ban took effect, ODH has received more than 32,000 inquires about the ban and nearly 10,000 reports of potential violations; ODH is following up on all complaints with an informational letter.

“Initial compliance rates are encouraging,” Harnish said. “This indoor smoking ban has great potential to reduce the smoking rate in Ohio.”

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**Contact: Ohio Department of Health, Office of Public Affairs, 614-644-8562**