

**Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health
Support the Proposals Designate Eight Bus Interchanges
at Tunnel Portal Areas as No Smoking Areas**

Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH) has been advocating to implement a multi-pronged approach on tobacco control in order to reduce tobacco use and protect public health. COSH fully supports the proposal of the Government to designate eight bus interchanges and adjoining facilities located at eight tunnel portal areas to further reduce the health risks of the public from secondhand smoke exposure.

Harms of secondhand smoke

Smoking produces secondhand and third-hand smoke, which is harmful to health of non-smokers. More diseases are found associated with secondhand smoke in the report of the US Department of Health and Human Service, including respiratory diseases, heart diseases, stroke, middle ear disease, low birth rate and sudden death syndrome of infants, etc. The study of The University of Hong Kong in 2005 revealed that nearly 7,000 people in Hong Kong were killed by smoking every year, in which over 1,300 were killed by secondhand smoke.

Protect public from secondhand smoke

The amendment of Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance in 2006 has designated all indoor public places and several public transport facilities as no smoking areas, and it was extended to all (including indoor and outdoor) public transport interchanges. To include 8 bus interchanges within the tunnel portal areas as no smoking areas can further reduce the health risks of the public from secondhand smoke exposure. The government should consider implementing smoking ban at all public transport waiting areas.

International examples to extend smoke-free areas

Singapore has banned smoking in any public area occupied by a queue of 2 or more persons since January 2013. Similar measure is effective in Beijing from June 2015. The Hong Kong Government should take these reference and further designate more outdoor public places as no smoking, such as all outdoor public transport stations, busy walkways and outdoor seating area of restaurants, etc.

Public support on banning smoking at public transport stops

According to COSH's Tobacco Control Policy-related Survey 2015, 65% of respondents said they were exposed to secondhand smoke at public transport stops in past 30 days. Over 90% (93.7%) of the respondents thought the Government should legislate to include all public transport stops as designated smoke-free areas, in which nearly 75% of the current smokers also support the policy.

The proposed measure is effective to safeguard the public from secondhand smoke and is overwhelmingly agreed by the public. COSH firmly supports the enactment. The Government and the Legislative Council should promptly impose smoking ban at the eight bus interchanges and adjoining facilities located at eight portal areas, and consider the further extension of no smoking areas.