

# Houston Department of Health and Human Services



## NEWS RELEASE

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[www.houstonhealth.org](http://www.houstonhealth.org)

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### **New smoking ordinance now in effect**

A new Houston ordinance now bans smoking in enclosed restaurants.

Under the ordinance that took effect Monday, restaurant managers must ask people in dining areas to extinguish burning tobacco products. Restaurants can still allow smoking in indoor bars as long as they are immediately adjacent to an exhaust system or otherwise ventilated so that smoke is not drawn into or across non-smoking areas.

A restaurant must post clearly visible signs to inform customers if it permits smoking in its bar area.

Smoking is also still permitted in outdoor dining areas.

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) will conduct inspections if it receives smoking complaints about specific restaurants. HDHHS will not issue or renew a food dealer's permit if a restaurant is not in compliance with the smoking ordinance.

The new ordinance continues the ban on smoking within 25 feet of an entrance to a public building. However, the rule does not apply to the outdoor seating areas of restaurants.

For more information about the ordinance, visit [www.houstonhealth.org](http://www.houstonhealth.org) or call 713-640-4359. People can e-mail complaints to HDHHS at [smoke.health@cityofhouston.net](mailto:smoke.health@cityofhouston.net) or fax them to 713-640-4342.

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