



MANDY SAWYER
RAINS COUNTY CLERK

March 3, 2026

Subject: Request to Consider a Smoke-Free Policy for the Rains County Courthouse Annex Building

Honorable Commissioners,

I respectfully request that the Court consider placing a smoke-free policy for the Rains County Courthouse Annex Building and their entrances on a future agenda for discussion.

Government facilities should provide a safe and healthy environment for employees and citizens conducting public business. Exposure to secondhand smoke and vapor from electronic cigarettes can negatively affect indoor air quality and pose health risks to individuals who do not smoke or vape. Members of the public should not be involuntarily exposed to these substances when accessing essential government services.

In addition to the health concerns, smoke-free policies promote a cleaner, more professional environment. They reduce **litter** from cigarette waste, **decrease maintenance costs**, and reflect a commitment to public wellness and responsible stewardship of public facilities.

Government buildings should model the standards of health, safety, and respect that we expect throughout our communities. Establishing and clearly enforcing a smoke-free policy in Rains County will promote a healthier workplace, protect visitors, and demonstrate the county's commitment to public health and professional standards in government facilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Mandy Sawyer

Rains County Clerk

Secondhand Smoke and Smokefree Environments

Secondhand Smoke

There is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure.^[1] Exposure to secondhand smoke, even for a short time, can cause health problems in children and adults, and can even be deadly.^[2] In the U.S., it contributes to approximately 41,000 deaths among nonsmoking adults and 400 deaths in infants each year.^[3] Since 1964, about 2.5 million nonsmoking people have died from health problems caused by secondhand smoke exposure.^[4]

Secondhand smoke causes stroke, lung cancer, and heart disease in adults.^[5] Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, more severe asthma, respiratory symptoms, and slowed lung growth.^[6]

Secondhand Aerosol

E-cigarette aerosol is not water vapor, and it is also not harmless.

E-cigarette aerosol can contain:^{[7][8]}

- Nicotine.
- Cancer-causing chemicals.
- Heavy metals like nickel, tin, and lead.
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.
- Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease known as "popcorn lung".

Secondhand aerosol exposes bystanders to harmful substances.

Smokefree Environments

Smokefree environments are any places where people are protected from exposure to secondhand smoke and other forms of tobacco product use.

Smokefree environments can include, but are not limited to:

- Municipalities.
- Multiunit housing.
- Worksites.
- Public spaces.

The only way to fully protect nonsmoking people from secondhand smoke is through implementation of smokefree environments.^[9]

Smokefree environments contribute significantly to public health by:^[10]

- Improving air quality.
- Reducing secondhand smoke exposure.
- Improving peoples' health.
- Reducing smoking in youth, young adults, and adults.
- Reducing and preventing health disparities related to secondhand smoke exposure, illness, lost productivity, and death.

Smokefree Municipalities

The list continues to grow of Texas municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive smokefree municipal ordinance to protect people from exposure to secondhand smoke.

The Texas Tobacco Prevention and Control Program contracts with the University of Houston to maintain an online and publicly accessible database for municipal ordinances. Of the 1,220 municipalities in Texas, 99 have 100% smokefree ordinances as evaluated by the University of Houston.

Visit the [Texas Smokefree Ordinance Database](#).