

Shanghai implements stricter smoking ban

A stricter smoking ban took effect on Wednesday in Shanghai, banning smoking in indoor public places, workplaces and public transport.

The new regulation bans smoking in indoor areas of hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, as well as airports, and train and port stations.

It also prohibits smoking outdoors at certain public venues visited by children, including schools, after-school educational institutions and children's hospitals. Outdoor auditoriums in stadiums are also subject to the ban.

The ban was passed by the municipal legislature in November. It is an amendment to the city's tobacco control rule implemented in 2010.

A recent survey showed 23.3 percent of adults in Shanghai were smokers, about 4.89 million people.

Individual violators of the new ban can be fined 50 to 200 yuan (7.2 to 29 U.S.dollars), and venue operators violating the ban face fines up to 30,000 yuan.

Shanghai has distributed 1.5 million smoking ban signs and 3.2 million smoking control posters.

"Smoking control needs legislation. But what is more important is implementation," said Chi Liming, a Shanghai resident.

However, people often ignore the ban.

"Sometimes even if we ask our guests to stop smoking, they may find another place and smoke stealthily," said Guo Yifeng, deputy general manager of the Shanghai International Convention Center.

China has 316 million smokers, with a further 740 million exposed to second-hand smoke.

Nearly 20 Chinese cities have passed their own tobacco control rules. Beijing, the national capital and home to more than 4 million adult smokers, implemented the strictest smoking ban in the city's history on June 1, 2015, prohibiting smoking in indoor public places, workplaces and public transport.

"A national regulation banning smoking in public places is undergoing legislative process," said Mao Qun'an, an official with the National Health and Family Planning Commission, in November.