

TOBACCO CONTROL

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The Airline Flight Attendants' fight to end smoking aloft



Smoking aloft: an illustrated history

A Blum, MD

1920s and 1930s

The emergence of civil aviation was associated with glamour, daring and sophistication. At the same time, smoking was being promoted and popularised. The two industries were often depicted together in cigarette advertisements with an aviation theme. Advertisers often linked women to smoking and flight. Images of aviators and aviatrixes such as Amelia Earhart were invoked to sell cigarettes.





1940s

Cigarettes were very popular during the second world war. Advertisements and posters from this time often depicted flying and smoking together. Although smoking was not initially permitted on airplanes, cigarette companies provided sample packs to customers.



1950s to 1970s

After the war, images of airlines and smoking were seen together worldwide. By the 1950s, virtually all of the world's airlines permitted smoking and distributed complimentary cigarettes (see Philip Morris-Ozark Airlines sample at right). In spite of the growing recognition of the harmful effects of smoking in the 1960s and 1970s, airlines made little effort to protect non-smoking travellers.



See why LUCKIES TASTE BETTER!

How to prove to yourself! Luckies are made better—to taste cleaner, fresher, smoother

Strip the paper from a Lucky to see—like peeling down the rind, skin and so on! The inner 2/3 from a newly opened pack, and you won't get the best before. They're going to taste different!

Here's why Luckies taste cleaner: The inner 2/3 from a newly opened pack, and you won't get the best before. They're going to taste different!

Here's why Luckies taste fresher: Peel the paper from a Lucky to see—like peeling down the rind, skin and so on! The inner 2/3 from a newly opened pack, and you won't get the best before. They're going to taste different!

Here's why Luckies taste smoother: The inner 2/3 from a newly opened pack, and you won't get the best before. They're going to taste different!

FOR A CLEANER, FRESHER, SMOOTHER SMOKE... Be Happy-Go LUCKY!

"I switched to **FATIMA** because they are **Extra-Mild** with a really different, better flavor and aroma. They're easily best of all King-Size cigarettes."

Joan S. Robinson
HOSTESS, CHICAGO, ILL.

It's FATIMA the Difference is QUALITY

Best of All KING-SIZE Cigarettes

Viceroy's got the taste that's right!

Smoke all 7 filter brands you'll agree: some taste too strong... some taste too light...

Viceroy's got—the taste that's right!

PLAYER'S is the greatest 90¢ in 10¢.

Que sí, hay **PLAYER'S** en Argentina

El jugador argentino más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo...

Resaca — azar — gate Casino

Like French within 10¢

Ja, PLAYER'S git's au i de Schwyz

El jugador argentino más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo... **PLAYER'S** es el jugador más grande del mundo...

Resaca — azar — gate Casino

1980s to present

By the 1980s, the failure of adjustable non-smoking sections to diminish cabin air pollution motivated a handful of flight attendants in the USA to lobby Congress for eradication of smoking aloft. The tobacco industry attempted to subvert these efforts by creating such terms as "environmental tobacco smoke", conducting bogus research, and dismissing allegations of harm from secondhand smoke as hysteria. In the late 1980s and 1990s the quest by flight attendants for legal redress for harm suffered from occupational exposure to tobacco smoke resulted in the largest class action settlement in the history of tobacco litigation and the creation of the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute.

The second-hand smokescreen.

For decades, public and private organizations have waged a massive campaign to discourage cigarette smoking. For most of that time, the target of this effort has been the smoker.

Recently however, the emphasis has undergone a major shift. Today there are scientists who claim that cigarette smoke in the air can actually cause disease in non-smokers. We hear a great deal about "second-hand smoke" and "passive smoking."

But is this new approach wholly motivated by concern for the non-smoker, or is it the same old war on smoking in a new guise?

These doubts are raised when we recall statements like the following by a spokesperson for the American Lung Association:

Probably the only way we can win a substantial reduction in the lung cancer and other disease burden caused by smoking is through the use of medical statistics and epidemiology studies of passive tobacco smoke effects.

Obviously, one way to make smoking "unacceptable socially" would be to suggest that second-hand smoke could cause disease. So it is not surprising that we are now seeing a flurry of research seeking scientific support for these suggestions.

Many independent sources believe the scientific evidence on passive smoking is questionable. But a analysis group of anti-smokers are using this issue in their campaign against tobacco as if the claims were established scientific fact.

Whether the actions of those who try to manipulate public opinion through scare tactics. As the late, respected pathologist, Dr. H. Russell Fisher, stated in testimony submitted to a Congressional hearing on passive smoking:

... [I]n the absence of any scientific proof of harm from environmental tobacco smoke, the use of such scare tactics is not a medical one. It is a political one. It is to be expected that some businessmen and politicians will do so, those who are guided by greed and fear and not scientific facts and the truth. It is a political one. It is to be expected that some politicians will do so, those who are guided by greed and fear and not scientific facts and the truth.

We are not ignoring the fact that cigarette smoking can be injurious to many non-smokers. But we believe this problem is best solved not by governments but by individuals, and not with vague rhetoric but with common sense and courtesy.

Of course, if anti-smoking advocates want to work for the abolition of smoking, that is their right. We only wish they would come out from behind their second-hand smokescreen.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company



With support from the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute, The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society is documenting the history of smoking on commercial aircraft. This pictorial review was based on an exhibit presented at the Twelfth World Conference on Tobacco and Health in Helsinki, August 3-8, 2003. Dr Blum serves as Director of the Center as well as FAMRI William Cahan Distinguished Professor. Lori Jacobi, MA, provided research assistance.