

Act 811 of 2011 Talking Points

Information on the Law

- The Arkansas Protection from Secondhand Smoke for Children Act, also known as Act 13, first passed in 2006.
- Act 13 of 2006 protected children under 6 and weighing less than 60 pounds from secondhand smoke while in vehicles.
- During the 88th General Assembly, Sen. Percy Malone, a democrat from Arkadelphia, filed a bill to increase the age of protection for the law.
- After passing the Arkansas Senate and House of Representatives, Governor Mike Beebe signed the bill into law on March 30, 2011.
- The new law, called Act 811 of 2011, protects children under age 14 from secondhand smoke while in vehicles.
- The law takes effect on July 27, 2011.
- Violating the law is a primary offense, meaning drivers can be pulled over and ticketed if seen smoking in a vehicle with a child.
- Violators must pay a \$25 fine, unless they can prove enrollment in a program to quit smoking on their first offense.
- Arkansas was the first state in the nation to pass a law protecting children from secondhand smoke in vehicles.
- Other states such as California, Louisiana and Maine, and Puerto Rico soon followed.

Information on Secondhand Smoke

- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, lower respiratory infections, middle ear disease, more severe asthma and slowed lung growth.
- 470 Arkansans die from secondhand smoke each year.

- Cigarette smoke contains hundreds of toxic chemicals – at least 69 of which cause cancer.
- Children are especially vulnerable to health effects of secondhand smoke because their respiratory, immune and nervous systems are still developing.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.