



What is the 20 Foot Rule?

In 2007, Fort Wayne passed a law prohibiting smoking inside public buildings and within 20 feet of the entrance of public buildings. Businesses in Fort Wayne are governed by the 20 foot rule, meaning smoking is not allowed within 20 feet of any business entrance. Fort Wayne’s smoke-free air law is more restrictive than the statewide law (passed in 2012) which only prohibits smoking within 8 feet of business entrances.

The 20 Foot Rule Helps Protect against Secondhand Smoke

Prohibiting smoking within 20 feet of an entrance to a building reduces the amount of secondhand smoke entering through the entrances, open windows, ventilation system or other means with no recirculation to other non-smoking areas. The 20 foot rule also helps people entering and exiting the building to avoid secondhand smoke.

Business Requirements

In order to adhere to the policy, Fort Wayne businesses must clearly post signage stating smoking is prohibited within 20 feet at every entrance. Free signage that is consistent with the guidelines of the smoke-free air law may be obtained by contacting Tobacco Free Allen County at 260.420.7484.

An Exception to the 20 Foot Rule

Restaurants with an unenclosed patio area may allow smoking at a distance of eight feet from the patio doorway if the patio doorway is not a public entrance or exit. Smoking is prohibited within 20 feet of all other entrances to the restaurant.

Enforcement of the 20 Foot Rule

Enforcement of the 20 foot rule will be handled by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department, the Fort Wayne Fire Department, the Fort Wayne Police Department, Allen County Building Department and Fort Wayne Neighborhood Code Enforcement.



Report a Violation

Anyone who wishes to report a violation of the 20 foot rule may do so by calling the Fort Wayne Fire Department. The Fire Department will issue a citation to the offending party. More information on Fort Wayne’s smoke-free air ordinance can be found at www.CityofFortWayne.org.

