

Tobacco Use in the Movies

Annual Report Card 2005

Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down!

Each year teenagers in Sacramento review the top 50 domestic box office movies for tobacco content. Movies are analyzed for perceived messages on tobacco use, who uses tobacco, and where tobacco is used. Results are then compared with data from previous years. This report reflects the top 50 movies for the period from May 1, 2004 through April 30, 2005.

Perceived Messages on Tobacco Use

Grade C-	Explanation 52 % of the movies in 2004-2005 contained pro-tobacco messages as perceived by the teenage reviewers. Only 22% of the movies contained anti-tobacco messages. Wealth, relaxation, 'being cool', celebrating and having fun were the most common pro tobacco messages identified by the reviewers.
	Comments: Depicting tobacco use as being fun, sexy, cool, edgy or related to wealth, power, rebellion and celebration has little to do with the physiological aspects of tobacco use and much to do with multi-billion dollar images created by the tobacco industry. Whenever the entertainment industry utilizes tobacco as a prop to create these images, it reinforces advertising efforts of the tobacco industry and encourages young people to use tobacco, whether intentional or not. Disease, death, odor, stained teeth, and isolation related to second hand smoke are the true companions of nicotine addiction. A realistic portrayal of tobacco use will help discourage young people from starting to smoke.

Who Uses Tobacco

Grade C	Explanation Stars and other featured actors lit up in 50% of all of the movies and 76% of the movies with tobacco. Extras lit up in 44% of all of the movies and 67% of the movies with tobacco. 65% of all the actors who smoked were stars and featured actors. 35% were extras.
	Comments: When stars and other featured actors light up in a movie it sends a powerful message to young people that tobacco use is an acceptable, even desirable, activity. As a recent study on the correlation between tobacco use by stars and use by teens summarizes its findings, "We believe this evidence strongly suggests that media portrayals of tobacco use by popular movie stars contribute to adolescent smoking." ² When a star smokes extensively, it also leaves an impression that tobacco use is the norm in the movie, even if the majority of actors do not use tobacco.

Report continues on back.

The Extent and Type of Tobacco Use

<p>Grade</p> <p>C</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p>44 % of the movies reviewed were without any tobacco use. Cigarettes were the most common tobacco used with 74% of all incidents. Cigars followed at 18% and pipes at 7%. 79% of all of the movies with tobacco were rated PG or PG 13 rated and 21% of the movies with tobacco were R rated. The only one of the 50 movies rated G contained no tobacco.</p>
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Extensive tobacco use in movies suggests that smoking is more common in society than it actually is. When tobacco use is viewed as a societal norm, it implies that smoking is acceptable and is another factor in encouraging young people to use tobacco. While not included in the grading criteria, tobacco use in G, PG and PG 13 movies is of a particular concern since these movies are accessible to younger audiences. Efforts to have movies with tobacco rated R reflect this concern and are supported by the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the American Medical Association, and the World Health Organization.</p>

Where Tobacco Is Used

<p>Grade</p> <p>C</p>	<p>Explanation</p> <p>Smokers lit up inside in 44% of all movies and 67% of movies with tobacco subjecting nonsmokers to second hand smoke. The most common indoor areas included the workplace at 24%, the home at 22%, in bars at 17% and restaurants at 11%.</p>
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Tremendous strides have been made in the United States to protect the health of the nonsmoker from environmental tobacco smoke. Concern over how tobacco use in movies reflects and impacts environmental tobacco smoke issues led Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! to evaluate where people were smoking beginning with 1998-1999 movies. The critical issue is whether actors light up in enclosed areas around nonsmokers.</p>

Grading System:

(Grading reflects 9-year history and TUTD assumptions concerning what is important and feasible.)

Perceived Messages: Based on percent of movies

(50% Pro, 50% Anti)
 Pro: **A:** 0-15%, **B:** 16-30%, **C:** 31-45%, **D:** 46-60%, **F:** 61% plus
 Anti: **A:** 41% plus, **B:** 31-40%, **C:** 21-30%, **D:** 11-20%, **F:** 0-10%

Extent of tobacco use: Based on percent of movies with 0 incidents

A: 75% plus, **B:** 55-74%, **C:** 35-54%, **D:** 15-34%, **F:** 14%

Leads Using Tobacco: Based on percent of movies

A: 0-20%, **B:** 21-40%, **C:** 41-60%, **D:** 61-80%, **F:** 81% plus

Where: Based on percent of movies with indoor smoking

A: 0-20%, **B:** 21-40%, **C:** 41-60%, **D:** 61-80%, **F:** 81% plus

¹ Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! is a program of the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails The Project is made possible by funds received from the Tobacco Tax Health Protection Act of 1988 - Proposition 99, under Grant Number 00-90377 with the California Department of Public Health Services, Tobacco Control Section. Further information about the program and a detailed report on findings can be obtained through contacting the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails, 909 12th St. Sacramento, CA 95814. (916) 444-5864 or visit its website at www.saclung.org.

³ "Favourite movie stars, their tobacco use in contemporary movies, and its association with adolescent smoking", Tobacco Control, 2001;10:16-22.