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## Smoking ban impacts businesses

It's been 6 months since law went into effect

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NORTHEAST WISCONSIN - It's been six months since a statewide smoking ban took effect in Wisconsin.

On July 5th, 2010 - bars, restaurants and workplaces were required to go smoke free. So if you wanted to light up, you had to take it outdoors.

That's had quite an impact on some area taverns, like Jerry's Bar in Oshkosh.

"I've seen a slight drop in business, and I compare it with other businesses in town," explained owner Scott Engel.

He says other businesses and bar owners he's talked with have seen about a 20% drop in business since the ban took effect.

"It's hard to be sure it'll all smoking related, but I know a lot of smokers are upset about it, and it has driven some to stay in, as they say, a little more often," Engel said.

Other places of business, however, have seen the opposite. At Kroll's West, owner Mike Wier says the ban has actually improved traffic.

"It was an interesting situation. We had people that were coming back that had been older customers, and they liked the idea that now it was smoke free," Wier explained.

Some businesses may not be seeing any effect, but that could be because they're not keeping to the code.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services says as of November, it has received 524 reports of businesses not complying with the law since it took effect.

However, statistics show the number of reports coming in each month has decreased since July.

What do patrons think of the change so far? Most we spoke with remain split on the issue.

"I really like it," said Freedom resident, Nikki Vanhandel. "I have a child, and that way she doesn't smell like smoke or inhale it."

"I think, if I had a right to say it, I think it should go back to the way it used to be," said Green Bay resident, John Degroot.

Not following the smoking law could cost you up to \$250.

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