

Manhattan smoking ban in effect, enforced on Aug. 18

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In a sticky parking lot behind a bar near the pier, a server stepped out with a Breathe Free MB poster in her hand and looked both ways before lighting up—"Where am I'm supposed to go on my two minute break to have a cigarette if I can't even smoke in the parking lot?"

Even if the city-wide ban on smoking in public in Manhattan Beach won't curb her habit, she will find a way to enjoy her Marlboro Light, she said.

"I'll find any nook or cranny of private property to take my smoke break."

The ban on smoking in public took effect last Friday. On Tuesday, the educational campaign kicked off at the Manhattan Beach Farmers Market. City leaders, organizations supporting the city's new ordinance and volunteers gathered to launch the campaign and to begin the distribution of posters, decals and other informational materials to Manhattan Beach businesses.

"The Breathe Free MB public education campaign will ensure residents and visitors alike are aware of the new rules governing smoking in our community so that all may breathe free whenever they are in public places in Manhattan Beach," said Mayor Amy Howorth.

"Compliance with the ordinance will improve the public's health by limiting exposure to second-hand smoke, and it will protect the environment by reducing the amount of cigarette debris that can pollute our ocean. We thank the volunteers and the ordinance's supporters for joining us today to launch this public education campaign."

Under the ordinance, smoking cigarettes and e-cigarettes in Manhattan Beach is limited to private residential property, moving vehicles and designated hotel or motel rooms.

Supporters of the ordinance including Beach Cities Health District Chief Medical Officer Lisa M. Santora, M.D., M.P.H., Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chairperson Craig Cadwallader and Manhattan Beach Downtown Business Association Executive Director Kelly Stroman joined Mayor Howorth at the kickoff event.

Volunteers distributed Breathe Free MB letters, posters, decals and business cards to businesses throughout downtown Manhattan Beach. The distribution will continue over the next week.

The city is also posting street banners, placing ads in local newspapers and undertaking other public information efforts to create an ongoing education program to ensure tourists, visitors and newcomers to Manhattan Beach will know the city requires that public places be smoke free.

Howorth said ridding Manhattan Beach from nicotine is very personal to her; both of her parents passed away from smoking related causes.

“We did not take this lightly, we spent many hours discussing it. There are some concerns from businesses about their employees who smoke. It will be a tough transition, but we care about them and their health, we will support them through this transition,” Howorth said.

Cadwallader said the ban on smoking in Manhattan Beach will result in a cleaner and healthier beach.

“I am more than proud as a citizen of Manhattan Beach that our city is the most environmentally responsible city. From the International Coastal Cleanup Day it was found that 30 percent of beach litter was cigarette butts, it's the No. 1 litter item on our beaches. The butts contain the filters which accumulate toxins, and then birds and fish eat them. If you put a cigarette butt in a fishbowl the fish will die,” he said.

The new smoking ordinance went into effect on July 18, but the city is delaying enforcement of the ordinance until Aug. 18 to give the public time to become familiar with the new law.