

Q: I admit it! I'm a smoker, and I'm getting really tired of all the anti-smoking restrictions when I'm traveling. I don't mind if hotels or restaurants make me smoke outside or in certain areas, but I'm running into more and more places on my trips where smoking is totally forbidden. Do we smokers have any rights any more?

A: We have a several comments. Long ago, we who were in the Army often heard: smoke 'em if you got 'em. The squawk box told Navy guys: the smoking lamp is lit. In those days of living in tight-bunked quarters in barracks and ships, non-smokers had to breathe it and endure it. Smoking was considered a normal way of life for at least 70 percent of all adults (and almost as many 13- to 18-year-old kids, too).



Of course, in those days there were no restrictions on smoking for civilians, either. Puffing in theaters, restaurants and everywhere else was OK, and few people complained. Cigarette ads were all over the TV tube, magazines and on giant Broadway signs. Even actor Ronald Reagan endorsed Chesterfields on his TV show and in magazine ads.

Today, after dire medical reports and lawyers got filthy rich by suing cigarette companies, the situation is much different. Latest polls show regular cigarette smokers make up less than 30 percent of the adult population, and kids are getting their cheap thrills from computer games, wifis and twittering.

You certainly have the right to smoke when you're traveling, but are asked (often forced) to consider other people around when you're puffing. Of course, tobacco smoking is legal, and the heavy taxes go for important government jobs such as fixing rocket toilets in space. Smokers also provide income for tobacco growers, cigarette makers, doctors, lawyers, retailers and cigarette girls in Vegas.

So, if you're traveling, as long as you're not breaking any non-smoking rules or bothering anyone else nearby, smoke 'em if you got 'em.