

Five hard-nosed reasons to R-rate movies with smoking

1 Kid-rated movies with smoking will recruit 3.2 million new young smokers in this generation, resulting in a million deaths. Smoking in movies is the only movie

content proven to cause widespread physical harm to young audiences. The R-rating will give producers a lasting incentive to keep smoking out of the films that kids see most. The CDC says the R-rating, consistently applied, would save a million lives.

2 Individual studio's policies don't keep kids safe. All major studios have published tobacco depiction policies, but they are incomplete and fitfully enforced. Result? The percentage of PG-13 films featuring tobacco imagery has not declined since 2010. And the number of tobacco incidents in PG-13 films with smoking actually increased, boosting audiences' tobacco exposure by 65 percent. Kids are at greater risk than before.



One in three kids recruited to smoke will die from smoking.

3 Film companies knowingly expose kids to harmful tobacco content. Big Tobacco and Hollywood have a long

history of commercial collaboration. The studios have known of the harm to young audiences since a 2003 MPAA-sponsored briefing on the first research studies. The MPAA's own health consultants delivered the same message in 2007. In 2009, state Attorneys General told the studios that they release a movie with

smoking "with full knowledge of the deadly harm it will bring to children who watch it." Studios, on notice but failing to act, have consigned hundreds of thousands of kids to tobacco disease.

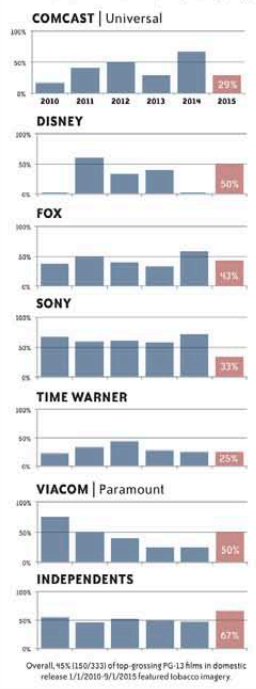
4 A single standard should apply to every movie, director, producer and studio. The charts at left show why the R-rating is the only way to protect young audiences. In the first half of 2015, four major studios (Disney, Paramount, Universal, Warner Bros.) behaved as if the R-rating were already in place. By September, all had released youth-rated films with smoking. Other MPAA studios and the independents have fallen short for years, keeping kids' exposure high. Producers, directors and studios need the R-rating's certainty and transparency. America needs an industrywide R-rating that can't be bent or broken at kids' expense.

5 Read it. The R-rating is reasonable. "Any future film that shows or implies tobacco should be given an R-rating. There are only two categorical exceptions: (a) when the depiction unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or (b) the depiction represents the tobacco use of an actual person, as in a biographical drama or documentary."

That's the simple solution, in fifty words or less. Smoking isn't "banned." Producers simply accept an R-rating for tobacco, as they do for other content. But tobacco imagery remains unique: it bought its way on screen, doesn't sell any tickets, and addicts millions of new young smokers wherever Hollywood movies are seen. The film ratings belong to the MPAA. The MPAA belongs to the major studios. These studios have no excuses left. By updating the film ratings to protect young audiences, studio leaders can save a million lives. Because they can, there's no defensible reason not to.

STUCK ON SMOKING

So far in 2015, 44% of PG-13 films have featured tobacco, no improvement over 2010. Performance varies by company:



One little letter **R** will save a million lives.

