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**Date:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 10:02AM  
**Subject:** Smoking as health, environmental and transport/walkability issue

History: ↻ This message has been forwarded.

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Please find enclosed our two recent articles about cigarette smoking and air pollution.

**Blue Skies China** proposes cigarette smoking is not only an issue for the **health panel**, but also an **environmental issue**; and, under pedestrian walkability/secondhand smoke, **a transport issue**.

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Article links:

<https://blueskieschina.com/2017/12/17/why-is-the-smoke-from-3-billion-cigarettes-not-included-in-our-emissions-inventory/>

<https://blueskieschina.com/2017/12/09/secondhandsmoke-every-30-seconds/>

Article text:

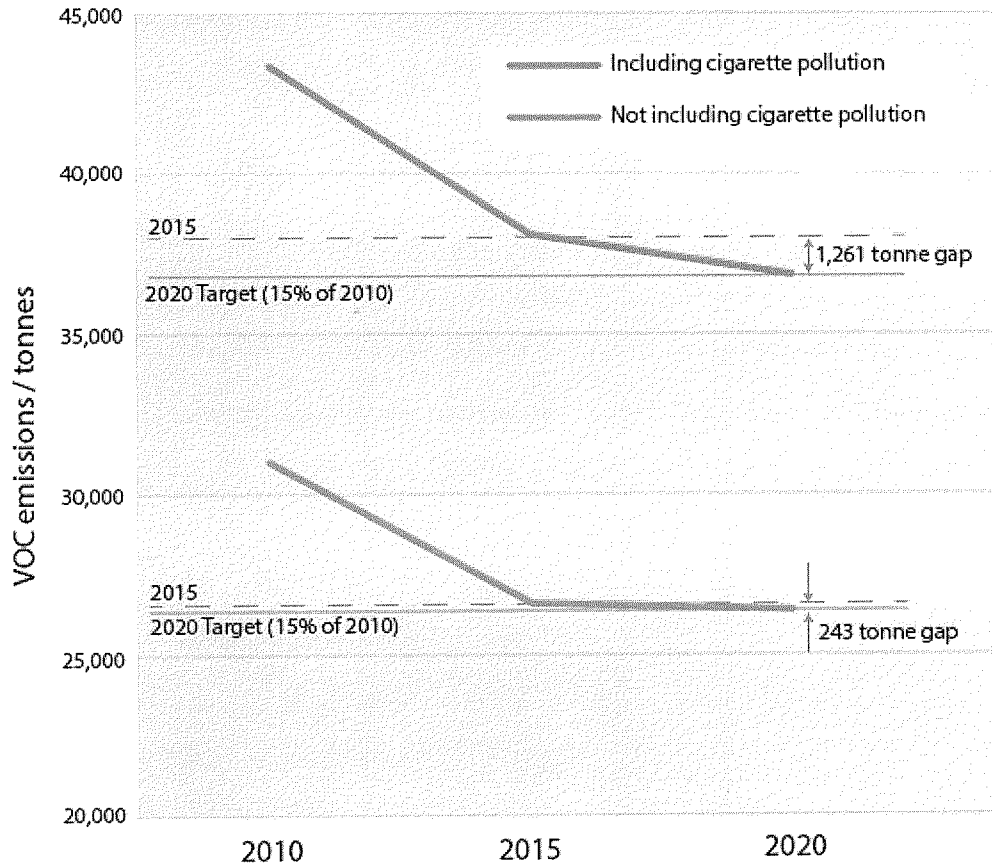
## Why is the smoke from 3 billion cigarettes not included in our emissions inventory?

*Posted on December 17, 2017 by James Ockenden in [Zero Smoke](#), [Campaigns](#), [News](#), [Environment](#), [Opinion](#)*

Hong Kong smokers produced 11,477 tonnes of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in 2015 according to new calculations by *Blue Skies China*: that's a 11,477-tonne cloud of smog-forming chemicals which would raise the city's VOC emissions figures by 43% if included in the public inventory.

Smoke is not seen as a major source of pollution in Hong Kong – but while a cigarette only weighs a gramme or so, the sheer number being smoked in Hong Kong adds up to a significant environmental debt. According to the [Census and Statistics Department](#), Hong Kong's daily smokers smoke around 3.1 billion cigarettes per year between them. If we estimate conservatively that this accounts for all smoking in the city (and ignore any smoke from occasional smokers or the [4 million mainland visitors per month](#)), we can re-tally our emissions inventory to more accurately reflect conditions on the ground. So what do the figures look like? Adding cigarette smoke to the inventory wouldn't be a disaster for the 2020 regional goals, but it means the next few years wouldn't be a celebratory saunter to the finish line, either.

## Hong Kong VOC emissions inventory and targets with and without cigarette pollution



The impact of counting cigarette pollution in our emissions inventory

	2010	2015	2020 target [1]
Measured VOC inventory (tonnes)[2]	31,020	26,610	26,637
Cigarette VOC (tonnes)[3]	12,305	11,477	–
<b>Total VOC</b>	<b>43,325</b>	<b>38,087</b>	<b>36,826</b>

According to last week's mid-term [regional emissions inventory communiqué](#) from Hong Kong's Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the city is already only a few hundred tonnes shy of its 2020 VOC reduction target. The latest figures show VOCs are down 14.2% on the 2010 baseline, requiring a further reduction of only 243 tonnes, or 0.9% of today's output, for Hong Kong to meet its regional 2020 commitment with Guangdong of a 15% reduction on the 2010 baseline.

But if the cigarette VOC inventory is included, the government's "nearly there" 14.2% mid-term report-card becomes a "must try harder" 12.1%, with the need to cut a further 1,261 tonnes from the inventory by 2020. That's around 5% of the present (non-tobacco) inventory and, without also reducing cigarette pollution (or banning paint thinner), the government would need to seriously step up efforts to pull this off.

The good news is, the 2020 VOC target could still be met by cutting the numbers of cigarettes smoked by 11%. Not only does this allow Hong Kong to meet its regional emissions inventory targets, but it would reduce VOC-sourced smog and other air pollution on the streets. Furthermore, having the EPD taking a hardline position against cigarette pollution would bring a new dimension to tobacco control debates and some much needed fresh ammunition in the fight against big tobacco.

We call on the government to include the significant pollution from cigarettes into Hong Kong's official

emissions inventory and to work out ways to reduce cigarette pollution as an air quality issue.

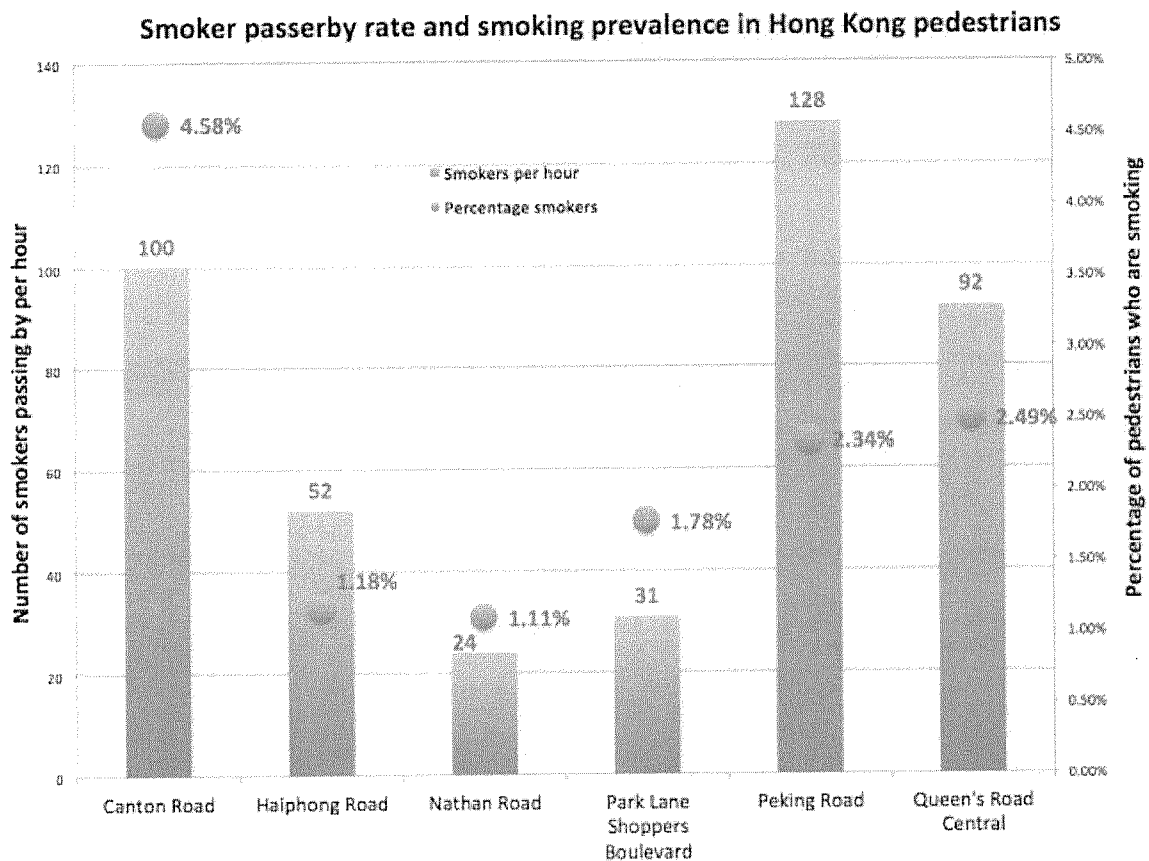
[1] Calculated as 15% reduction on 2010 baseline

[2] [Government press release](#) "Guangdong and Hong Kong release mid-term review results on PRD air pollutant emission reduction targets for 2015 and 2020"

[3] Cigarettes smoked calculated for 2015 using the Census & Statistics Department's [Thematic Household Survey Report No. 59](#) on daily smoking rates. Calculated for 2010 using tax data (supplied directly from Hong Kong Customs & Excise department) from 2010 and 2015 and assuming a similar ratio of "cigarettes sold:cigarettes smoked" in 2015 and 2010. VOC emissions calculated using [VOC and Particulate Emissions from Commercial Cigarettes: Analysis of 2,5-DMF as an ETS Tracer](#), Simone M. Charles, Chunrong Jia, Stuart A. Batterman, and Christopher Godwin, *Environmental Science & Technology* 2008 42 (4), 1324-1331

# Pedestrians choking under secondhand smoke: one smoking person passes every 30 seconds on Peking Road

Posted on December 9, 2017 by [James Ockenden](#) in [Campaigns](#). [Zero Smoke](#)



Smoking rate and prevalence among Hong Kong pedestrians, according to new Blue Skies China

research (pedestrians surveyed = 8,262)

Pedestrians are subjected to a burning cigarette passing by every 30 seconds on one busy Hong Kong street, with the number of smoking pedestrians measured at 128 per hour on Peking Road this week.

According to new research by *Blue Skies China*, which aims to shed light on Hong Kong's true smoking prevalence, the average number of smokers per hour on Hong Kong streets was 56, meaning one smoking pedestrian passes by roughly every minute. The most offensive street was Peking Road outside iSquare, notching up 128 smoking smokers per hour, closely followed by Canton Road, with 100 per hour, and Queen's Road Central near Prosperity Tower, with 92 per hour.

*Blue Skies China* measured the number of non-smoking and smoking pedestrians over 15 minute intervals at various times ranging from lunchtime to early evening, across six selected sites. The sites were chosen to be typically busy streets, and counting was carried out by simple hand counters and timer. Data was uploaded to GISCloud for recording and analysis.

According to the early findings, Hong Kong pedestrians show an average smoking prevalence of 1.91%. The highest proportion of smokers was found on Canton Road (outside number 3, towards the Star Ferry end), with a prevalence of almost 4.6%.

More on this research to come as more data is collected, please bookmark our [Zero Smoke](#) campaign to stay updated.