

British government should ban smoking in cars: doctors

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Britain should introduce a ban on all smoking in cars to protect people from second-hand smoke, a leading doctors' union said Wednesday.

The British Medical Association (BMA) urged the government to take a "bold and courageous step" and extend current laws to include a ban on [smoking](#) in private vehicles.

Britain banned smoking in public places such as pubs and restaurants in 2007 but has avoided legislating for private areas.

"The UK made a huge step forward in the fight against tobacco by banning smoking in all enclosed public places, but more can still be done," said Vivienne Nathanson, the BMA's director of [professional activities](#).

"We are calling on UK governments to take the bold and courageous step of banning smoking in private vehicles. The evidence for extending the smoke-free legislation is compelling."

Children and elderly people are the worst affected, especially because they are often unable to refuse to take a journey in a smoky car, the BMA said.

It cited research as showing that levels of dangerous toxins in cars can be 23 times higher than in a typical smoky bar.

Around 4,000 adults and 23 children die each year as a result of second-hand smoke in Britain, the BMA said.

The British parliament is due on November 25 to debate a bill calling for a smoking ban in private vehicles when children are present.

Prime Minister David Cameron, a former smoker, has said he supports the smoking ban in public places but is "nervous about going into what people do inside a vehicle."

British smokers' lobby group Forest said the evidence that smoking in cars is harmful to other passengers is "weak".

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