

Multi-country study: Many Airbnb listings that allow smoking lack smoke detectors

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In a study that analyzed Airbnb listings across 17 countries, researchers from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that less than half of the Airbnb venues that allow smoking are equipped with

smoke detectors, while nearly two-thirds of Airbnb venues that do not allow smoking are equipped with smoke detectors.

The findings, published online February 22 in the journal *Preventive Medicine*, highlight the range of safety standards travelers might encounter in residential accommodations when they travel.

"Cigarettes are consistently reported as a leading cause of residential fire deaths," says Vanya Jones, Ph.D., the study's lead author and an assistant professor with the Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy at the Bloomberg School. "Given that smoke detectors are an effective way to drastically reduce the number of fire deaths, it is concerning that venues that allow smoking would be less likely to be equipped with smoke detectors."

For their study, the researchers analyzed data from 413,339 Airbnb venues in 43 international cities. Data were used with permission from Inside AirBnB, a website not affiliated with Airbnb that aggregates publicly available information about Airbnb listings posted by venue hosts. At the time of the study, Inside Airbnb was collecting data related to Airbnb listings in 43 cities in 17 countries and jurisdictions (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland and the U.S.). Data were collected from venues in each city from July 17, 2015, to February 18, 2017.

The sample included 38,525 venues that allow smoking and 374,814 venues that do not allow smoking. According to the analysis, 46 percent of those that allow smoking had smoke detectors, whereas smoke detectors were present in 64 percent of those that do not allow smoking.

Across the full sample of venues included in the analysis—both smoking and non-smoking—63 percent reported having smoke detectors in their

online Airbnb profile. The lowest prevalence of smoke detectors was among venues in Italy (2 percent) and the highest was in Scotland (83 percent).

The study also looked at the prevalence of carbon monoxide detectors and found that 19 percent of venues that allow smoking were equipped with carbon monoxide detectors, whereas 33 percent of non-smoking venues had carbon monoxide detectors. Overall, approximately one-third (32 percent) of the total venues analyzed reported having carbon monoxide detectors, with the prevalence ranging from a low of one percent among venues in Italy to 59 percent in Scotland.

According to the analysis, the rates of Airbnb rentals that allow smoking vary across countries—from three percent in Denmark and Scotland to 40 percent in Greece. Across the entire sample, 9 percent of venues allowed smoking. The researchers say that while smoke-free laws have been passed in all of the countries included in the analysis—either at the national or sub-national level—these laws generally do not apply to private spaces, such as homes.

The World Health Organization estimates that five percent of worldwide injury-related deaths are from fire-related burns, and most fire deaths and fatal carbon monoxide poisonings occur in homes. In some jurisdictions, there is evidence that the presence of working smoke detectors has reduced fire-related deaths by half. Similarly, carbon monoxide alarms have been proven to reduce deaths associated with carbon monoxide leaks from appliances or buildup of carbon monoxide from combustible materials.

In the United States, smoking-related fires have declined over the last several decades, which has been credited to a decrease in [smoking](#) and improved fire safety regulations, including required installation of smoke detectors.

More information: "The prevalence of fire and CO safety amenities in Airbnb venues that permit smoking - findings from 17 countries," *Preventive Medicine* (2019).

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

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