

## Smoking and aircrew

### Background

Cigarette smoking is the single most important preventable environmental factor contributing to illness, disability and premature death in Europe and North America. The high morbidity and mortality rate is due to the effects of cigarette smoke on several diseases, but primarily on lung cancer, ischaemic heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease.

### Physiological and psychological effects of smoking

Tobacco smoke contains a rich assortment of toxic components. Carbon monoxide and nicotine have received considerable scientific attention, particularly as to their acute and chronic physiological effects. A great deal of literature is available describing the effects (and the effects of withdrawal) of these substances on cardiovascular, psychological and psychomotor functions in active and passive smokers. Aviation environmental factors such as altitude, hypoxia, fatigue, and performance (impairment of memory, reaction time, vision, and vigilance) have been studied as they relate to carbon monoxide exposure. Particulates found in cigarette smoke also add to the irritative effect of low humidity and ozone on eye and nasal mucous membranes. These occur despite the rapid ventilation rates of the modern cockpit.

In light of the above, IFALPA recommends a completely smoke free environment on all aircraft including the flight deck area.