

[One in a Series]

What if the toy industry treated lead the same way the film industry treats smoking?



Kids and toxic hazards don't mix.

360,000 American teenagers alive today will die prematurely because of smoking in movies.

That's why state Attorneys General and health authorities say smoking should be eliminated from the movies kids see most.

Instead, the film industry has delayed a real solution, choosing public relations over public health.

A new report on 2007-10 film ratings finds:

- The film industry has not increased the rating of any film because of smoking.
- The film industry has instead added fine-print "smoking" labels to only 15% of all the wide-release, youth-rated films with smoking.
- These labels often downplay the amount of smoking in the film, regardless of actual content.

Toys should be lead-free and G/PG/PG-13 films should be smokefree.

Labels are not enough. To keep smoking out of youth-rated movies, simply R-rate future smoking.

If smoking triggers the R-rating, producers and distributors will calibrate tobacco content just as they now routinely calibrate violence and strong language.

But it's not automatic. There will be reasonable exceptions for films depicting actual historical persons who actually smoked and the dire health consequences of smoking and secondhand smoke.

After all, we don't ban all toys. Nor do we merely label them. We get the lead out of them.

The way the film industry should get the smoking out of youth-rated films, now.

Download the new UCSF report at www.escholarship.org/uc/item/8hn866tt

Film-Flam: How MPAA/NATO movie labels hide the biggest media risk to kids



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