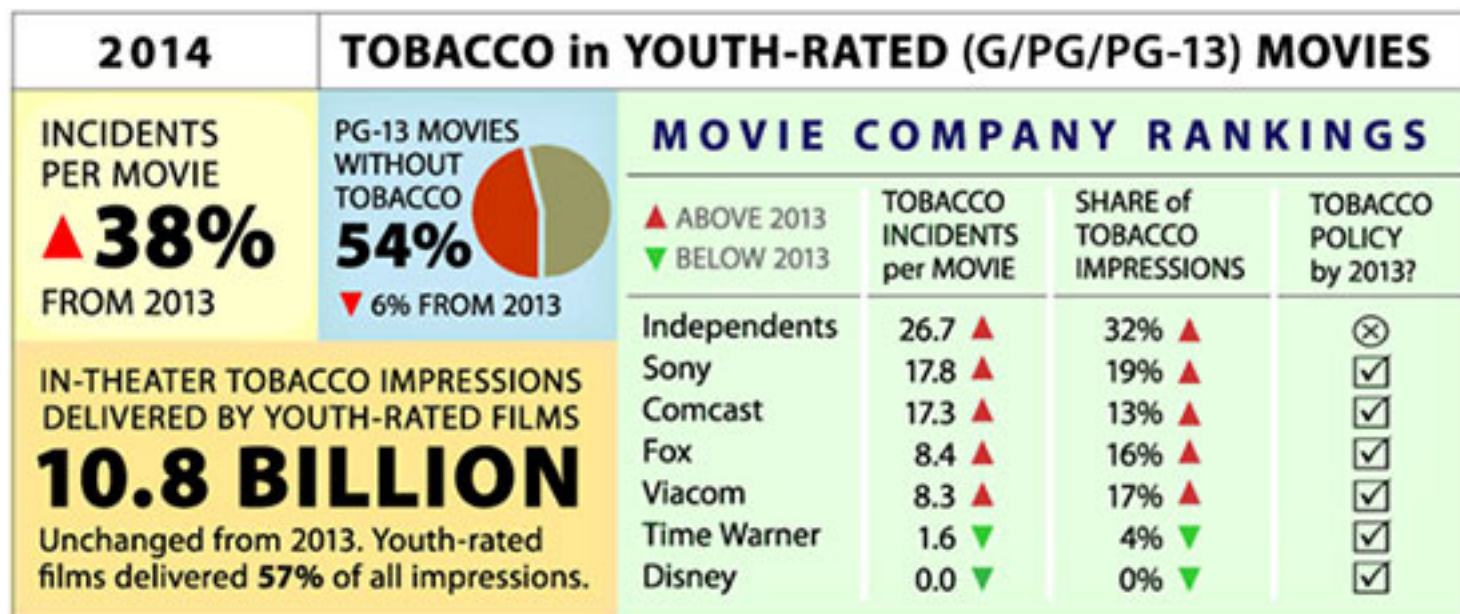


Smoking in the Movies



[Text description of this infographic](#) is available on a separate page.

- A “tobacco incident” is one occurrence of smoking or other tobacco use in a movie.
- “Incidents” are a measure of the number of occurrences of smoking or other tobacco use in a movie.
- A “tobacco impression” is one person seeing one incident.
- “Impressions” are a measure of total audience exposure.
- This report’s movie sample comprises all movies that ranked among the top 10 in ticket sales (“top-grossing movies”) in any week of their first-run release to U.S. theaters.

Overview

- Watching movies that include smoking causes young people to start smoking.¹ The more smoking young people see on screen, the more likely they are to start smoking.¹
- The percentage of youth-rated movies (G, PG, PG-13) that were smokefree doubled from 2002 to 2014 (from 32% to 64%). But in youth-rated movies that showed any smoking, the average number of tobacco incidents per movie also nearly doubled (from 21 to 38) over the same period.²
- The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the studios' organization that assigns ratings, provides a "smoking label" along with the regular rating for some movies that contain smoking. However, almost 9 of every 10 (88%) youth-rated, top-grossing movies with smoking do not carry an MPAA "smoking label."²
- The 2012 Surgeon General’s Report (*Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and*

Young Adults) concluded that an industrywide standard to rate movies with tobacco incidents R could result in reductions in youth smoking.¹

- Giving an R rating to future movies with smoking would be expected to reduce the number of teen smokers by nearly 1 in 5 (18%) and prevent 1 million deaths from smoking among children alive today.³

Movie Ratings⁴

G (General Audience): All ages admitted

PG (Parental Guidance Suggested): Some material may not be suitable for children

PG-13 (Parents Strongly Cautioned): Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13

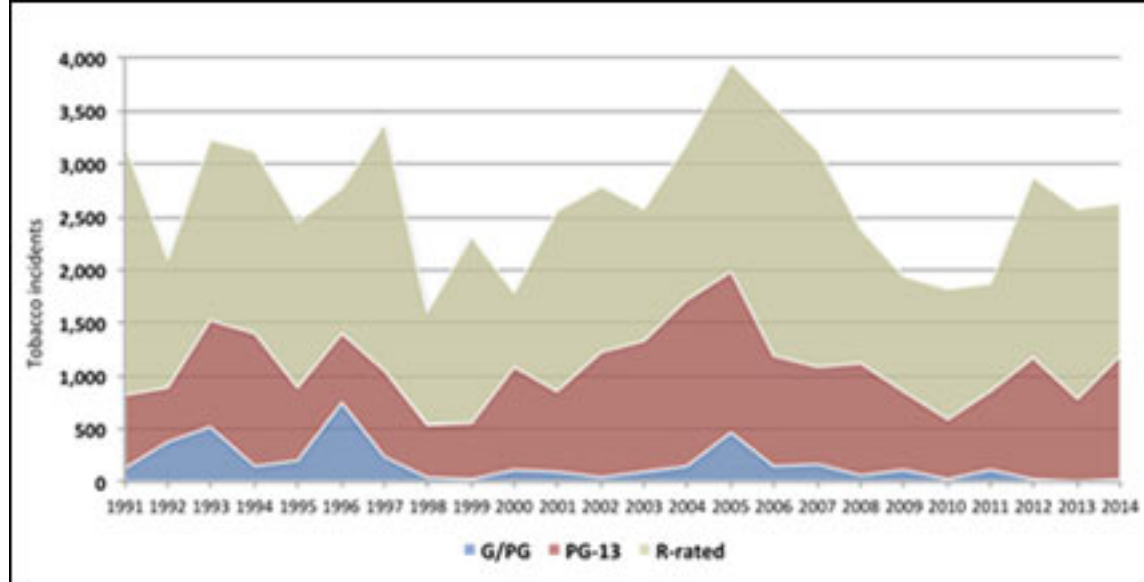
R (Restricted): Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian

NC-17 (Adults Only): No one 17 and under admitted

Additional 2014 Findings²

- The percentage of PG-13 movies with tobacco incidents increased from 2013.
- About half of PG-13 movies (54%) remained tobacco-free in 2014—a level substantially unchanged since 2010 (57% tobacco-free).
- In 2014, the number of tobacco incidents in the average youth-rated movie with tobacco (38 incidents) was higher than in any year since at least 2002. The number in the average R-rated movie with tobacco (52 incidents) was the highest since 2006.
- Movies rated G were tobacco-free for the third year in a row. However, the total number of tobacco incidents in movies rated PG more than tripled from 2013 to 2014 (from 8 to 27).
- PG-13 movies included about as many total tobacco incidents in 2014 (1,165) as they did in 2002 (1,169). Only 2004 and 2005 showed higher totals (1,572 to 1,513).

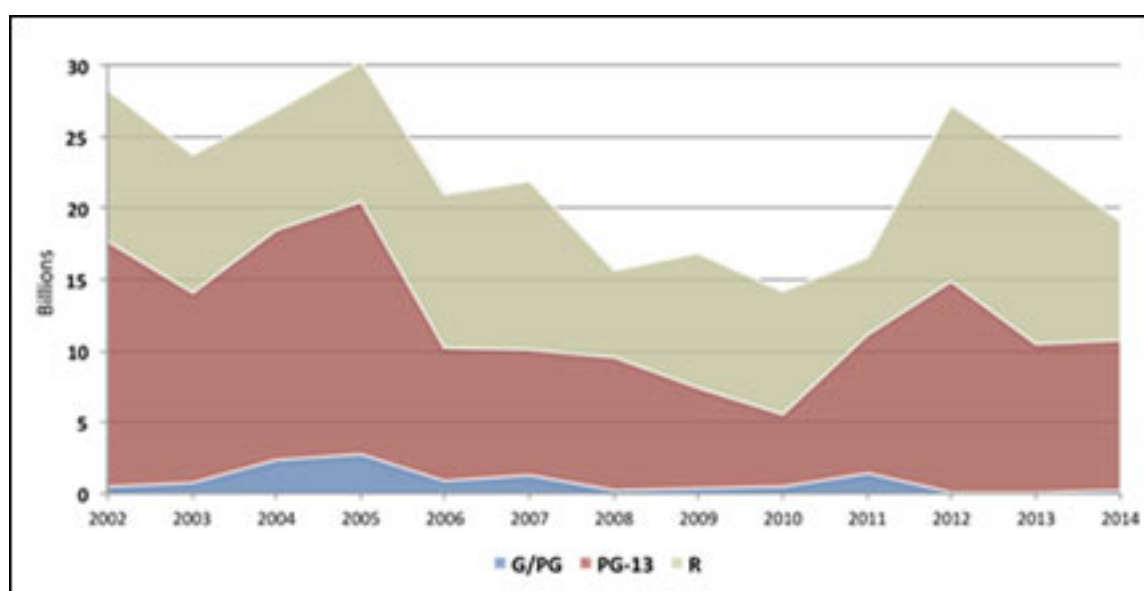
Figure 1. Tobacco Incidents in Top-Grossing Movies by Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Rating, 1991–2014²



[Text description of this graph](#) is available on a separate page.

- The number of tobacco incidents in movies varies by movie company. From 2010 to 2014:²
 - Tobacco incidents increased in youth-rated movies from independent movie companies, Sony, Comcast (Universal), Fox, and Viacom (Paramount).
 - Tobacco incidents decreased in movies from Disney and Time Warner (Warner Bros.).

Figure 2. In-Theater Tobacco Impressions by Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Rating, 2002–2014²



[Text description of this graph](#) is available on a separate page.

Conclusions

- The data show that individual movie company policies alone have not been efficient at minimizing smoking in movies. Movie companies with tobacco depiction policies included 18% more tobacco incidents in their 2014 youth-rated movies than they did in 2013 (552 in 2014 versus 466 in 2013).²

- Reducing the number of tobacco incidents in movies will further protect young people from starting to use tobacco.² Several strategies have been identified to reduce youth exposure to onscreen tobacco incidents:^{1,2}
 - The 2012 Surgeon General’s Report concluded that an industrywide standard to rate movies with tobacco incidents R could result in reductions in youth smoking.¹
 - The 2014 Surgeon General’s Report (*The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*) concluded that youth rates of tobacco use would be reduced by 18% if tobacco incidents and impressions in PG-13 films were eliminated by such actions as having all future movies with tobacco incidents receive an R rating.¹
 - States and local jurisdictions could also work towards reducing tobacco incidents in movies.²

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012 [accessed 2015 May 19].
2. Polansky J, Titus K, Atayeva R, Glantz S. [Smoking in Top-Grossing U.S. Movies, 2014](#) University of California, San Francisco, Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, 2015 [accessed 2015 May 19].
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2015 May 19].
4. Motion Picture Association of America. [Film Ratings](#) [accessed 2015 May 19].

For Further Information

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