



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO**

BRANDON JOHNSON
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2025-4

**EXECUTIVE ORDER REGARDING THE PROHIBITION OF SMOKING ON
CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY PROPERTIES AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES**

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago’s Clean Indoor Air Ordinance and the SmokeFree Illinois Act already prohibit smoking in public transit facilities; and

WHEREAS, multiple credible reports—such as Block Club, FOX 32, CBS 2—detail persistent smoking on Chicago Transit Authority (“CTA”) trains, buses, stations, and platforms; and four out of five transit riders reporting exposure to cigarette or cannabis smoke; and

WHEREAS, exposure to secondhand smoke is a well-established risk factor for chronic respiratory illnesses—including asthma, COPD, emphysema, bronchitis, and pneumonia—and heightens risk for hospitalization, emergency care, respiratory failure and mortality; and

WHEREAS, asthma and respiratory disease disproportionately affect Chicago’s Black residents: among Chicago children ages 5-19 years old, Black children made up 53% of respiratory related emergency room visits from 2016-2021; and

WHEREAS, Black communities in Chicago already suffer disproportionate exposure to air pollution and poor living conditions that exacerbate respiratory disease—Black neighborhoods are more likely to be located near highways and heavy pollution sources, compounding health risks; and

WHEREAS, Chicago’s public transportation system is relied upon by thousands of schoolchildren, essential workers, and medically vulnerable residents—many from Black and Latine communities—who may be involuntarily exposed to secondhand smoke, furthering environmental injustice; and

WHEREAS, structural inequities in transit access and service have left communities of color with fewer alternative mobility options and greater reliance on public transit; and

WHEREAS, exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke is causally linked to asthma exacerbation, COPD and other respiratory conditions, especially among children and vulnerable adults, as recognized by public health authorities including WHO and CDC; and

WHEREAS, low-income communities of color on Chicago’s South and West sides face higher cumulative environmental burdens—air pollution, and limited healthcare access—while relying heavily on CTA for essential travel to work, school, and medical appointments; and

WHEREAS, the persistence of smoking aboard public transit not only undermines public health goals and equity, but also diminishes rider comfort and confidence in the transit experience; and

WHEREAS, the CTA serves as a lifeline for our city. In 2024, CTA rail provided 127.5 million rides, an increase over 2023 of 9 percent. CTA buses provided 181.7 million rides, a year-over-year increase of 12 percent and the highest recovery rate of all modes at 77 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Overall CTA ridership for 2024 reached 309.2 million, a CTA systemwide increase of 11 percent; and

WHEREAS, while ridership and service continue to improve, community safety remains a deterrent to returning to pre-pandemic levels. A full-force-of-government approach is needed to continue and accelerate these positive trends; and

WHEREAS, since taking office Mayor Johnson’s comprehensive violence prevention strategies—including community intervention, youth employment and mental health resources, trauma-informed care, and the CTA Violence Intervention Program—have achieved historic citywide reductions in violent crime, including significant declines in shootings, homicides, and overall violence; these strategies have proven that multisector, public health frameworks can safeguard communities; and

WHEREAS, secondhand smoke aboard CTA vehicles harms passengers—especially youth, seniors, and individuals with chronic health conditions. An estimated 68,000 K12 student rides occur each weekday, exposing children to toxic carcinogens and particulates that raise asthma attacks, respiratory illness, and long-term health risk; and

WHEREAS, the CTA Code of Conduct policy bans smoking (including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, cannabis, and other inhaled substances) and despite best efforts has encountered difficulties with ensuring compliance; now, therefore,

I, Brandon Johnson, Mayor of the City of Chicago, do hereby order, as follows:

SECTION 1. The City’s Department of Public Health (“CDPH”) and Department of Family and Support Services (“DFSS”) shall promptly provide all requested assistance to the CTA to assist the CTA in updating its Code of Conduct and signage to reflect an explicit zero tolerance policy, with visible “No Smoking” notices in all English, Spanish, and other prevalent languages.

SECTION 2. CDPH and DFSS shall offer all requested assistance to partner with the CTA to assess and explore the feasibility of assembling a Transit Health Response Team (THRT) comprised of:

- Community Violence Interrupters: Trusted local leaders who engage smokers directly, deescalate confrontations, and guide individuals toward compliance and needed support.
- CARE Mental Health Providers: Clinicians equipped to offer onsite crisis counseling, smoking cessation resources, and referrals to long-term treatment.

DFSS teams will help unhoused residents access shelter and resources to support their safety and stability and distribute any public health materials around smoking to unhoused riders.

THRT teams are to operate during high ridership hours (e.g., 6–9 a.m., 3–7 p.m.) at busiest rail lines and bus corridors, especially those serving schools and senior centers.

By January 31, 2026, and quarterly thereafter, CDPH and DFSS shall, together with such participation as the CTA may provide, jointly report on:


- Number of direct interventions by violence interrupters and CARE staff,
- Estimated reduction in smoking incidents,
- Rider satisfaction surveys, with emphasis on children's and caregivers' perceptions of clean-air safety.

SECTION 3. CDPH and DFSS shall, together with such participation as the CTA may provide, partner with schools, block clubs, faith leaders, and community-based organizations to:

- Co-create educational campaigns on secondhand smoke risks,
- Reinforce the smoke-free policy at school adjacent bus stops and stations,
- Invite families and youth to “Clean Ride” community events.

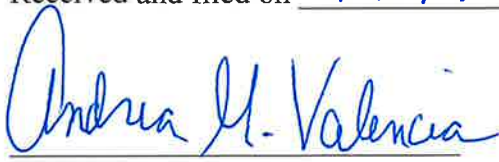
SECTION 4. CDPH, DFSS, and the Chicago Police Department are directed to, and the CTA and the Regional Transportation Authority are encouraged to, incorporate enforcement, staffing, and outreach costs into their FY 2026 budgets. The Department of Finance is directed to identify grant opportunities to support this initiative.

SECTION 5. This Executive Order shall take effect upon its execution and filing with the City Clerk.



 Mayor

Received and filed on 7.24.2025



 City Clerk

Chicago City Clerk-Council Div.
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