

Smokers: A dying breed?

By I.N. Hale



Momotaro and friends in search of a smoking area.

Okayama City Council recently passed a bylaw to remove smoking from public streets in the center of Okayama. The law allows for fines of up to ¥1000 for people caught smoking in prohibited areas, but council workers are currently only actively warning people as part of the gradual process of introducing the law.

Recently completed reforms to JR Okayama station might be the most visible results of efforts to move tobacco smoking from public places around Okayama. Designated 'Smoking Areas' have disappeared from the old train platforms and concourses, effectively making all undercover areas inside the station building entirely non-smoking. (There is still a smoking area on the bullet-train platform, and some long-distance trains have smoking carriages.)

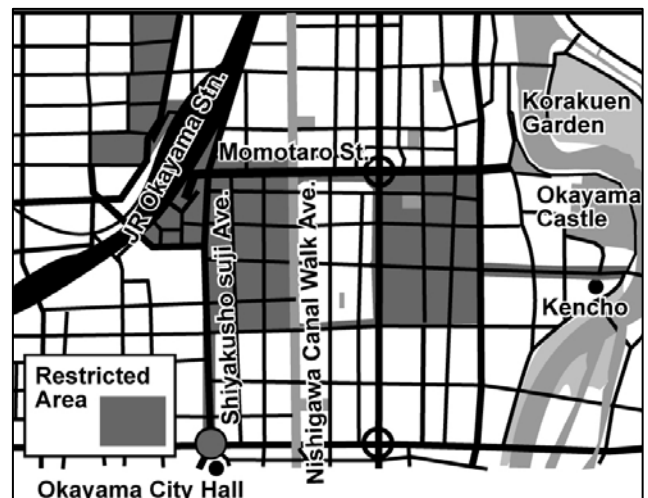
The campaign to push smokers further and further away from crowded places continues outside of the station. While the old West Exit still has an ashtray just outside the door, slightly sheltered by the stations awning, the newly constructed overpass from the station to the LIT City Building and the ANA Hotel is entirely non smoking. On the east side of the station there are now only two public ashtrays; one near the bus information center, and the other close to the

pedestrian lights near the fountain. You'll need to provide your own umbrella or parasol if you want any shelter from the sun or rain at either of these locations, as there is none provided.

The two "smoking areas" on the East side of the station display a map showing the areas that fall under a recently passed Okayama City ordinance to ban smoking on Okayama's footpaths. (See map)

Other laws that smokers might need to be aware of include:

- ① Okayama University and Okayama Shoka University Highschool were declared a Smoke Free Areas in April 2004.
- ② Okayama Prefecture has announced that all Senior High schools will be smoke free from April 2008.
- ③ In Nagoya City, smoking in taxis is prohibited as of June 2007.
- ④ Some wards in Tokyo have issued fines to footpath smokers since 2002 and Osaka begins issuing fines for public smoking in non-smoking areas on October 1st 2007.



The Okayama Insider adopts a neutral position on the rights of smokers and non-smokers. This article was written to inform readers of new bylaws that relate to smoking in public places, not to mourn the restrictions placed on smokers, nor applaud the efforts of anti-smoking campaigners. Our primary intention is to inform readers of Okayama's news.