

# Young Adult Fact Sheet #14: California ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

76.3% of active duty personnel are between 18-34.

31.1% of California Active Duty personnel report using tobacco.

82% of young active duty military personnel reported a desire to stop smoking.



15.2% of active duty military personnel are in the United States Air Force. Of those in the Air Force, 17.5 % reported smoking.

30.3% of active duty military personnel are in the United States Marine Corps. Of those in the Marine Corps, 26.9% reported smoking.



11.7% of active duty military personnel are in the United States Army. Of those in the Army, 17.8% reported smoking.

39.6% of active duty military personnel are in the United States Navy. Of those in the Navy, 20.2% reported smoking.



**With the more than 150,000 personnel on more than 20 installations and a disproportionate number of young adult active duty smokers, military personnel are an important part of what makes California so unique.**

## Why does tobacco use matter to military personnel?

- \* **Tobacco use affects readiness.** Put another way, tobacco use affects a service members ability to perform his/her job while also putting other service members at risk (whether through the light of a lit cigarette or the compromised lung capacity needed for running). Tobacco use has also been shown to decrease night vision, mental acuity, wound healing, stamina, and increase injuries.
- \* **Tobacco use affects PT scores.** PT refers to Physical Training and is an essential component of all branches of the US Armed Forces. Many jobs within the four branches of the military require tremendous physical strength and stamina. Tobacco compromises that strength.
- \* **Tobacco use affects family members.** We all know the dangers of secondhand smoke and know what it does to everyone including children and pets. This reality is no different for military service members.

## Cultural Realities that Affect Service Members Use of Tobacco:

- \* **Each branch is different and deals with tobacco use differently.** Additionally, each military installation differs in their approach to tobacco cessation services and tobacco policy enforcement. A service member could go from one installation to the next and find very different institutional cultures exist around tobacco use.
- \* **For some service members, there is a perception that asking for help is a sign of weakness.** Weakness is not seen positively in the military (think of the Marine Corps motto: "Pain is weakness leaving the body."). Additionally, there is a strong belief that one is "strong enough" to stop tobacco use on his/her own.
- \* **Stress cannot be overstated for military personnel especially given the current situation for many service members.** Frequent deployments accompanied with intense combat conditions create a challenging environment for all service members in the US and stationed abroad.

All statistics are from: California Active Duty Tobacco Survey-2004.  
Available online at: <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/tobacco/documents/eval/ActiveDutyTobaccoStudy.pdf>

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