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Complaints filed over smoking violations

Bylaw department sticks with plan to educate first, and then ticket violators

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In the first day and a half of the city's new no-smoking bylaw, eight complaints were lodged against four establishments defying the rules.

Alvin Murray, the city's acting director of bylaw services, said an officer would be sent to at least two of the bars Tuesday night, but it's unlikely the bars would be fined.

"We're doing education first," Murray said. "If we get further complaints, they will be charged."

However, he said they also won't tolerate anyone openly flouting the bylaw.

Managers at Filos, on Canyon Meadows Drive, and the Bull and Finch Pub didn't want to comment on the complaints, although the Bull and Finch on Elbow Drive S.W. was still allowing smoking on its premises Tuesday.

No one at Austin's Restaurant, also on Elbow Drive, would comment.

Murray said the city was investigating whether Austin's qualifies as a gaming facility, exempted from the smoking ban until Jan. 1, 2008.

But the presence of VLT machines alone isn't enough to be able to allow smoking, Murray said -- the existing land use for the premises has to be for a licensed gaming facility.

The fourth restaurant the city received a complaint about was a "mom and pop pizza parlour," Murray said.

Last fall, city council decided to accelerate its ban on smoking in public places.

Patrons of most establishments had to butt out by Jan. 1, while casinos, bingos and any bar or restaurant that had previously built a separate smoking room can allow smoking until Jan. 1, 2008.

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