



## Why Smoke-Free Housing?

### Why Pursue Smoke-Free Housing?

This document is for property owners, landlords and property managers who want to explore adopting a smoke-free policy for their multi-unit buildings. Continue reading if you are interested in a policy that can help you save money, reduce resident complaints, improve the health of your residents and building and increase your market share.

Smoke-free apartment policies are quickly becoming the standard for multi-unit housing across the United States. A smoke-free policy is simple and straightforward. There is no state or federal law that prohibits a property owner from implementing a smoke-free policy for their buildings or grounds, and instituting a policy does not preclude someone who smokes from living in the building. It simply requires that all residents abide by the policy while on the property. Going smoke-free in your multi-unit buildings is one of the best moves you can make for your residents and your bottom line.

### Reduces Operating Costs

- Apartment turnover costs can be three to five times greater when smoking is allowed, compared to the cost of maintaining and turning over a smoke-free unit.
- More people die in fires started by smoking materials than any other type of fire.
- Insurance companies are beginning to offer discounts on property casualty insurance for multi-unit apartment owners with a 100% smoke-free policy.

### Residents Prefer Smoke-Free Housing

- Statewide surveys, conducted throughout the United States, demonstrate that about 75% of renters, including smokers, prefer to live in a smoke-free building.
- Secondhand smoke complaints and requests for unit transfers drop dramatically following the implementation of a smoke-free policy.
- In New Mexico, less than 19% of the general population smokes, so it makes sense that the vast majority of renters want to live in a smoke-free environment.

### Resident Health Improves with Smoke-Free Housing

- There is no risk free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. The EPA has identified secondhand smoke as a Class A carcinogen, the most toxic class of chemicals that are known to cause cancer in humans.

- Secondhand smoke is a leading trigger of asthma attacks and other respiratory problems and a known cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Secondhand smoke is classified as a “toxic air contaminant,” putting it in the same class as other contaminants including asbestos, lead, vehicle exhaust and a host of other strictly regulated chemicals.
- Ventilation systems do not protect families from secondhand smoke. Most air filter systems are designed to remove odors, not the toxic particles from tobacco smoke.
- Research demonstrates that up to 65% of air can be exchanged between units. Smoke travels through cracks in floors and walls, electrical and plumbing systems and tiny crevices exposing individuals in adjacent units to secondhand smoke.

### Other Policy Benefits

- Smoke-free policies are largely self-enforcing. Because residents expect and tend to prefer a smoke-free environment, they will abide by the policy. Smoke-free policies are like any other lease provision, such as trash disposal or pet restrictions and should be implemented and enforced accordingly.

### Gain Green Building Credits

- Numerous Green Building programs such as the United States Green Building Council’s LEED program ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)) and the Enterprise Community Partner’s Green Communities initiative ([www.enterprisecommunity.com](http://www.enterprisecommunity.com)) provide incentives for smoke-free properties.

### Existing Laws Allow Smoke-Free Housing

- There are no federal, state or local laws that prohibit a landlord or condominium association from adopting a 100% smoke-free policy. You can make your entire property smoke-free, including all units and outdoor spaces.
- Smoking is not a legal right. Smoke-free policies do not infringe on the legal rights of individuals.
- Smokers are not a protected class under any state or federal law.
- An individual’s addiction to nicotine is not a disability.

For more information, please visit  
[www.smokefreeathome.org](http://www.smokefreeathome.org)