

Smokefree Housing Facts

What landlords should know about going smokefree

“We found that going smokefree reduced all of our costs for turning our units around, it reduced our cost for insurance on our properties, and we know that it would do the same thing in the private market for others. It also helped our residents become healthier people. Because they are no longer smoking, we now have healthier communities in which we’re providing affordable housing.”

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Landlords: Why go smokefree?

Adopting a smokefree policy will lower your cleanup costs, reduce fire risk and boost marketability of your property.

We all know that smokefree policies help protect people’s health. But there are other benefits, too.

Property owners and managers know that smoking annoys non-smoking tenants. It also damages your property and increases your turnover costs. And it increases the risk for fires. Adopting a smokefree policy can help you avoid those problems.

Consider the advantages:

- ✓ *Marketability:* Smokefree housing in Montana is in demand. The 2013 Adult Tobacco Survey found that 81 percent of renters not currently living in a smokefree building want their landlord to go smokefree. Only 25 percent of Montana renters are currently protected by smokefree policies. (1)
- ✓ *Cost Savings:* Apartment turnover costs are two to seven times greater when smoking is allowed in a unit, studies show. Tobacco smoke leaves a sticky residue on walls, curtains, cabinets, blinds, appliances, fixtures and ceilings. The odor and toxins often stay in carpets, curtains and walls. Dropped ashes can burn tiles, carpets, countertops and bathtubs. (2)
- ✓ *Improved safety:* Cigarettes are the leading cause of home fire fatalities in the United States. In 2010, these fires caused more than 600 deaths and \$663 million in property damage. From 2004 to 2013, smoking was the second-highest known cause of fire fatalities in the State of Montana. (3)
- ✓ *Smokefree policies are legal:* There is no Montana or federal law that prohibits a landlord from making an entire building or property smokefree. In fact, having a smokefree policy may protect you from the risk of some legal violations such as warrant of habitability or covenant of quiet enjoyment. Tenants with disabilities caused by or made worse by secondhand smoke also may have legal protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (4)



Healthier housing

People want to live in healthy surroundings. But that's not possible if smoking is allowed in a property. Even if a tenant doesn't smoke, secondhand smoke from other units travels through the building's ventilation system, through electrical outlets, and through doorways and windows. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke (5). Air purifiers and ventilation systems can't prevent secondhand smoke from passing into neighboring units. In 2008, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air Conditioning Engineers stated that "the only means of effectively eliminating health risk associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity." The best way to protect your tenants is to make your property smokefree. (6)

It's easy.

The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) can help you implement a smokefree policy on your property. We provide model lease language, "smokefree" signs and window clings at no cost to landlords, and free Montana Tobacco Quit Line promotional materials to help tenants quit smoking. We can also connect you with the Tobacco Prevention Specialist in your community, who can help you go through the steps of implementing your policy, and talk to your tenants about the health benefits of smokefree housing.

Smokefree policies are largely self-enforcing. Because they expect and often prefer a smokefree environment, tenants tend to abide by the policy. MTUPP can also provide you with tips for high compliance in order to make the process of going smokefree as smooth as possible.

Sources

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2. 2013.Smoke-Free Housing Project (Oregon), A program of the American Lung Association of Oregon, 2007, <http://www.smokefreeoregon.com/housing>.
3. Clinch, P. Residential Structure Fire Causes, NFIRS 5.0 National Reporting System, 2013.
4. NAA National Apartment Association, AIMS Property Management Update, Feb 1, 2008 <http://www.tcsg.org/sfelp/NAA-SFMemo.pdf> .
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Surgeon Generals Office, The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2006, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke>.
6. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air Conditioning Engineers http://www.ashrae.org/content/ASHRAE/ASHRAE/ArticleAltFormat/20058211239_347.pdf.

For resources, help or questions, please visit:

[dphhs.mt.gov/mtupp/
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