

Landlords:

# Smoke costs a Fortune

## RESOURCES

Smoke-free Homes and Cars Program

[www.epa.gov/smokefree/](http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/)

Welcome to Smoke-Free Home

[www.smokefreehome.org/](http://www.smokefreehome.org/)

Smokefree Apartment House Registry

[www.smokefreeapartments.org/](http://www.smokefreeapartments.org/)

*Are you burning money? If you allow tenants to smoke inside their units profits are blowing out the window.*

### Indoor Smoking's Hidden Costs

As a landlord you're well acquainted with the obvious effects of cigarette smoke on your rental properties.

Stinking, stained walls.

Discolored cloth, plastic and paint.

Burn-holes in carpets, curtains and furniture.

But what about the unseen costs? Smoking damage is more than an expensive, smelly nuisance. Chemicals from cigarette smoke linger under home surfaces long after the smoke is gone. Those chemicals mix with common indoor pollutants creating cancerous agents that remain within the apartment for years.

Every breath taken in that apartment, every drink, every shower, every meal can expose tenants, pets and guests to cancer-causing chemicals.

**No matter how well you clean the apartment, those chemicals— "thirdhand smoke"—remain.**

### The True Cost Of Smoked-Out Apartments

In 2009 the housing authority of Fort Collins, Colorado made the decision to turn all of the public housing in their city smoke-free. Residents were notified and one year later, July 1 2010, the smoking ban went into effect. Now smokers must go outdoors to light up.

Why did Fort Collins do this?

When a smoker moves out the housing authority, like any landlord, faces replacement costs. Fort Collins was sick of paying \$5,000 per unit to remove heavy smoke residue whenever a smoker moved out. The total costs were around \$100,000 every year, a bill the housing authority no longer wanted to foot. And that's not counting burned down homes and potential secondhand smoke litigation.

## GET YOUR LIFE >INFOCUS

©2010 Education Specialty Publishing, LLC  
Post Office Box 6986 Metairie, LA 70009-6986 • 877-329-0578  
[www.ESPublish.com](http://www.ESPublish.com) • product #PB-PS105

*This pamphlet may not be copied.*





According to a 2005 Department of Homeland Security Study:

Only 4% of all residential fires were reportedly caused by smoking materials in 2002. These fires, however, were responsible for 19% of residential fire fatalities and 9% of injuries.

The fatality rate due to smoking is nearly four times higher than the overall residential fire rate; injuries are more than twice as likely.

The average \$ loss per fire is 22% higher in smoking related fires.

How much does allowing smoking inside your units cost you? How many more coats of paint does a smoked-out apartment require? How does the wood and carpet look, feel and smell? What about the risk of fire? Would you be able to cover the cost of a secondhand smoke or fire lawsuit by a neighbor or resident? Fort Collins is far from alone in deciding the costs far outweighed the benefits.

More and more public and private housing providers throughout the nation are enforcing nonsmoking policies:

In Portland, Oregon, Guardian Management and the housing authority both made all of their units – more than 12,200 – smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed inside or in the halls. Health risks, complaints by non-smokers and an \$80,000 fire all contributed to the decision.

In Maine 19 section 8 housing providers, and counting, enforce smoke-free policies.

At least ten cities in California have passed residential smoking control ordinances.

The Smoke-Free Apartment House Registry has a list of 350 nonsmoking property owners and believes there are many more nonsmoking properties that have not registered.

How Smoke-Free Should You Go?

Your property can be as smoke-free as you want. You can ban smoking in hallways and common areas or designate smoke-free floors, halls or sections. You can ban smoking throughout an entire building or in all your buildings.

You may not know it but it's likely that many of your current tenants wish their environment were secondhand smoke free. A Baldwin Park, California citywide survey showed that 88% of residents would like to live in a nonsmoking section and 85% would like to live in a completely nonsmoking building but only 17% complained.

How smoke-free you want to become should depend upon how much of this market you wish to capture. Don't worry about forcing smokers out; you can still rent to smokers, they'll just have to light up in a designated smoking area.

**WARNING: NON-SMOKING BUILDINGS MAY ELIMINATE VACANCIES AND CAUSE EXCESSIVE PROFIT**

Renters across the country are speaking. What they're saying is, "I would rather live in a nonsmoking building and I'd even be willing to pay more to do it." They're also saying, "I'm home." Smokeless buildings fill up faster and stay full longer. Combined with the lowered cost of maintenance and replacement of a nonsmoking apartment that makes a recipe for success.

If you're concerned about jumping headfirst into a new policy, try it out on a portion of your property before committing completely. The results will speak for themselves.

How To Make Your Building Smoke-Free

While you can institute nonsmoking policies throughout your buildings, making the interiors of residency units nonsmoking will require some preparation.

First, you must give the residents of units that are to become smoke-free notice of the change. You can accomplish this via mail, pamphlets, door-to-door canvassing or any other method that addresses all of the affected residents. Make sure to mention that the lease or rental terms are going to change, and that residents choosing to remain will have a nonsmoking clause added to their paperwork.



The next step is to clean smoked-out apartments. If your current cleaning contractors are sufficient, that's great. If not you'll have to find cleaners that can get the job done, or research smoker-specific cleaning methods. One of the lures of a nonsmoking apartment is that there's no trace of a previous resident's smoking, making this step very important.

**While it may seem difficult and costly to erase the signs of smoking, take pleasure in knowing this is the last time you'll have to do it.**

At the same time you're making ready to freshen the apartments you can draft the new lease clauses. There is a large and growing national campaign for nonsmoking residences that can help you with the paperwork. Sample leases, legal advice and consulting on the process of becoming a smokeless landlord are all available over the phone and on the web.

Evicting Danger

You wouldn't allow your tenants to store un-refrigerated meat or burn leaves in their units. Smoking is just as toxic and dangerous, and it affects everyone in your buildings. Make the safe choice for your business and your tenants.

**Say no to danger. Say no to smoking in your units, today.**

