

# Smokefree Housing Facts

## What residents should know before renting

“Exposure of non-smokers to the tobacco smoke of others is a health hazard. That is especially true for children and people with heart and lung disease.

Second-hand smoke (smoke that is still in the air) and third-hand smoke (smoke residue on surfaces) contain carcinogens and toxins.

Allowing smokers to subject others to these effects against their will denies them a basic right of health and clean air.”

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### Tobacco smoke doesn't stay next door: What renters need to know about secondhand smoke

If you live in an apartment without a smokefree policy, your health is at risk. That's because doors and walls can't stop a neighbors' tobacco smoke from finding its way into your unit. Smoke drifts through ventilation systems, through doorways and windows and even through electrical outlets.

### Where there's smoke, there's danger

Secondhand tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, 11 of which are known cancer-causing poisons (1). In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has concluded there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure.

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of health problems such as:

- Heart disease, heart attacks, and increased heart rate.
- Respiratory problems, such as bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Burning eyes and throat.
- Ear Infections.
- Nosebleeds.
- Increased blood pressure.
- Headaches.
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Low birth weight and pre-term babies.
- Lung cancer and emphysema. (2)

### Smoke knows no boundaries

Air purifiers and ventilations 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.” (3)



## Protecting your living space

In Montana, most households limit their exposure to secondhand smoke by not permitting smoking inside the home. And the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act, implemented in 2005, protects people from being exposed to secondhand smoke in public places such work places, restaurants and bars.

However, people living in multi-unit housing can't control their exposure if their neighbors are smoking unless the landlord chooses to adopt a smokefree policy for the building.

While only one-in-four Montana renters (25 percent) are protected by such policies, most renters in the state wish they had this protection. In fact, the 2013 Montana Adult Tobacco Survey found that 81 percent of renters not currently protected by a smokefree policy would like to see their landlord adopt one. (4)

## Finding a smokefree apartment

To protect your health, look for housing that is protected by a smokefree policy. You can find smokefree housing by using the State of Montana's Housing Search website: <http://mthousingsearch.com/>

Click "Find a Place to Rent" under the "Find Housing" section. Search for housing based on your location. Facilities with a no smoking icon next to them have landlords who prefer or require non-smoking tenants. This, however, does not guarantee that the entire building is smokefree.

Be sure to ask the landlord if you would be protected by a smokefree policy, and how extensive that policy is. Would people be prohibited from smoking in all units, or only some? Will they be allowed to smoke immediately outside your door, allowing smoke to drift into your living space? The policies with the best protection from secondhand smoke prohibit smoking on all parts of the property, indoor and outdoor.

## Taking action

You also can encourage your existing landlord to adopt a smokefree policy. There are many financial benefits for landlords who go smokefree, such as reduced cleaning costs and greater marketability.

Information about all the health and financial benefits of going smokefree is available on the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program website. Please visit:  
<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/mtupp/tobaccofreehousing/>

Or contact:  
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## Sources

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3. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air Conditioning Engineers [http://www.ashrae.org/content/ASHRAE/ASHRAE/ArticleAltFormat/20058211239\\_347.pdf](http://www.ashrae.org/content/ASHRAE/ASHRAE/ArticleAltFormat/20058211239_347.pdf)
4. Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Montana Adult Tobacco Survey. Helena (MT): Chronic Disease Bureau. Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program; 2013.