

SMOKEFREE HOUSING SAVES LIVES

A HOUSING PROVIDER'S GUIDE
TO GOING SMOKEFREE



MONTANA
TOBACCO USE
PREVENTION PROGRAM

MONTANA
DPHHS
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.
Department of Public Health & Human Services



The Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP) is a public health program housed in the Department of Public Health and Human Services. MTUPP aims to address the public health crisis caused by the use of all forms of commercial tobacco products, which may include reducing initiation of tobacco use among youth and protecting Montanans from dangerous exposure to secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol exposure.

How can the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program help you?

- Provide free signs and window clings which designate the property as smokefree.
- Provide free Montana Tobacco Quit Line promotion materials to help your residents quit.
- Connect you with your local community tobacco prevention specialist, located in almost every county and Tribal nation in the state. Your tobacco prevention specialist can present information on the importance of the policy to your residents or staff, help you perform a resident survey, and help you evaluate your signage needs.
- Provide you with model policy language.
- Give you tips for high compliance to help make going smokefree as smooth as possible.

Why Go Smokefree?

As a housing provider, you can play a role in eliminating a significant cause of illness in the home and a major cause of preventable death in the United States: secondhand smoke. You can also save money on apartment turnover, prevent fires, and attract more residents by adopting a smokefree policy in your facility.



5 REASONS TO GO SMOKEFREE

#1



Smokefree housing policies protect your investment.

Smokefree policies are legal and are not discriminatory. Making your properties smokefree can reduce your costs, risk and liability. Residents with health issues that are caused by or worsened by secondhand smoke exposure may pursue legal action against property owners or managers if appropriate steps are not taken to resolve the problem. (1)

#2



Smokefree environments reduce health risks.

There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure and the only way to prevent exposure is by eliminating smoking. Smokefree housing policies protect tenants, staff, and guests from more than 7,000 chemicals in secondhand smoke; 70 of which are known to cause cancer. (2)

#3



Smoking increases the risk of property damage.

Smoking in units can lead to burn marks on the counters, yellow walls, trashed carpets, odor, and house fires. Property damage from smoking is hard to clean and can make units less attractive to new renters. Apartment turnover costs are up to 7 times greater when smoking is allowed inside. (3)

#4



Most Montanans want smokefree housing.

Seventy percent of Montana renters are in favor of smokefree policies. Smokefree housing policies can help retain your current residents and even attract new ones. Many people want their homes to be smokefree to protect their health and belongings and are in search of smokefree options. (1) (4)

#5



Free assistance and resources are available to you.

Local smokefree housing experts can provide you the tools you need to put a policy in place and carry it out. Contact your county or tribal Tobacco Prevention Specialist for assistance; they can supply model policy language, free signs, and other resources. Visit tobaccofree.mt.gov for more information.

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3. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Control. Smokefree Housing: A Toolkit for Owners/Management Agents of Federally Assisted Public and Multi-family Housing. <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/pdfowners.pdf>. January, 2012.
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“ I am exposed to secondhand smoke... I now have been to the doctor, prescribed numerous inhalers, antibiotics for bronchitis. It's been ongoing for a year. My lungs are painful... I am back to where I started, feeling hopeless, lungs are congested, and inhalers are failing to help... Why is it too much to ask that I do not want to die from secondhand smoke? I need some help, what are my rights? What can I do? ”

– Anonymous Complaint
from a Montana Multi-Unit
Housing Resident

Creating Healthy Housing: Secondhand Smoke is Toxic

Secondhand smoke – the smoke that comes from a lighted tobacco product or from a person who is smoking tobacco – contains more than 7,000 chemicals. Of these chemicals, 70 are known cancer-causing poisons and 250 are known toxins.¹

The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke,” concluded that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke, and the only way to protect people from the dangers of secondhand smoke is to eliminate the smoke exposure.²

Secondhand smoke causes more than 41,000 deaths per year and thousands of people in the U.S. suffer from conditions caused by or made worse by secondhand smoke.^{3,4} Secondhand smoke is categorized as a Group A carcinogen by the EPA, placing it in the same category as asbestos and coal dust.⁵ It's more than a nuisance: it's a public health hazard.

“ Why is it too much to ask that I do not want to die from secondhand smoke? ”



Secondhand Smoke in Apartments

Testing and research conducted by the Center for Energy and Environment on buildings in Minnesota shows that: (6)

- Airflow between units in apartment buildings is significant and virtually impossible to eliminate.
- The average cost to seal a unit to reduce secondhand smoke leakage was about \$700 per unit.
- Sealing the air leaks is still not enough to completely eliminate the secondhand smoke problem.

That fact is, secondhand smoke cannot be mitigated by ventilation systems or air purifiers.

“Filtering air won’t help! The only way to protect people is to make buildings smokefree.”

In 2020, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating & Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) released its latest position document on secondhand smoke. The document concludes that: (7)

- Any level of tobacco smoke is unhealthy.
- The only way to protect people from tobacco smoke is to make buildings smokefree.
- Air fresheners, cleaners, purifiers, dilution ventilation, air distribution (air curtains), and separating smokers from nonsmokers are not proven effective.

ASHRAE “recommends that multifamily buildings have complete smoking bans inside and near them in order to protect nonsmoking adults and children.”

WHAT HOUSING LEADERS SAY 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.”

– Patti Webster
CEO, Executive Director
of HomeFront, Billings

Include E-cigarettes or Vapes in Your Smokefree Policy

- E-cigarette aerosol is not harmless “water vapor.” It can contain nicotine, ultrafine particles, heavy metals & toxins known to cause cancer.
- E-cigarettes can be used to deliver nicotine, marijuana & other drugs.
- The World Health Organization recommends that e-cigarettes are not to be used indoors to minimize the risk of bystanders breathing in aerosol.
- Keeping air free from secondhand smoke & secondhand e-cigarette aerosol is the best way to protect public health.



26%

The 2018 Montana Adult Tobacco Survey found that one-in-four respondents who live in multi-unit housing (26%) are protected by a smokefree policy set by their housing provider.

69%

Of Montana multi-unit renters who do not have a smokefree policy in their building or complex, the majority (69%) are in favor of their housing provider adopting a smokefree policy.

26%

That means that by passing a smokefree policy, you can market a product that most Montanans want, but only 26% have.⁸

The Legality of Smokefree Policies in Multi-Unit Housing

There is no Montana law or federal law that prohibits a housing provider from making an entire apartment building smokefree. Smokefree policies are not discriminatory and may actually protect housing providers from the risk of some legal violations such as warranty of habitability or covenant of quiet enjoyment.

Residents with disabilities caused by or made worse by secondhand smoke may also have legal protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Federal Fair Housing Act.⁹



The Bottom Line

Going smokefree will save you money on apartment turnover, reduce the risk of fire, and potentially reduce the cost of insurance premiums.¹⁰

Apartment turnover costs can be two to seven times greater when smoking is allowed compared to the cost of maintaining and turning over a smokefree unit. Tobacco smoke leaves sticky residue on walls, curtains, cabinets, blinds, appliances, fixtures, and ceilings. The odor and toxins stay in carpets, curtains, and walls. Dropped ashes may result in burn damage to tiles, carpets, countertops, and bathtubs.¹¹

According to restoration experts, when converting a smoke-filled unit to a non-smoking unit, a housing provider should, at a minimum:¹²

- 1 Thoroughly wash walls and ceilings with detergent and very hot water to remove as much nicotine and tar residue as possible; Wear gloves and use multiple clean rags to prevent simply pushing the residue around. Wash, rinse, repeat!
- 2 Repaint walls with two or three coats of paint. If walls are not thoroughly washed prior to repainting, nicotine stains can seep through even multiple layers of paint.
- 3 Tear up carpeting and padding, and wash floors before replacing carpeting.
- 4 Replace curtains/blinds/window coverings to prevent off-gassing of smoke into the environment.
- 5 Clean out ventilation ducts and replace filters. Heating and air conditioning systems recirculate stale smoke in the unit and throughout the building.

As housing providers know all too well, the ongoing cost of properly cleaning rental units for new residents serves as a strong financial motivation of going smokefree.

Fire: Protecting Your Investment and Your Residents

Cigarette-caused fires often result when a smoker drops, abandons, or improperly disposes of a smoldering cigarette. A dropped cigarette can lie in furniture or bed linens and smolder for up to 45 minutes, causing fire ignition or large amounts of smoke.¹³

Cigarettes and other smoking materials are one of the leading causes of home fire fatalities in the United States. In 2018, these fires caused about 390 deaths and \$319 million in property damage nationally.¹⁴

Montana statistics from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) show cigarettes contributed to at least 38 residential fires in 2020, resulting in at least two deaths and \$1.3 million in property loss.¹⁴





How to Go Smokefree

- 1 Inform your residents that you want to adopt a smokefree policy. Hold resident meetings. Explain why you want to go smokefree and get their feedback on the process. Local tobacco prevention specialists can help you during this step by presenting information to your residents and helping you conduct a resident survey, as necessary.
- 2 Pick a date when you want the building to be completely smokefree. Plan when you will need to begin giving residents notices about the policy change.
- 3 Renew existing leases and initiate all new leases with a smokefree lease addendum. See the policy language on the “Model Lease Addendum” on our website at: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/Tobacco/SmokefreeHousing/ModelSFHLeaseAddendum.pdf>.
- 4 Post signs on your property to remind everyone of the new policy. Free signs and window clings are available. Order signs from the online store at tobaccofree.mt.gov. A smokefree housing sign sample can be found in Appendix A.
- 5 Promote quitting tobacco use by advertising the free Montana Tobacco Quit Line on your property. Quit Line promotional materials can be ordered for free at tobaccofree.mt.gov.
- 6 Advertise that you have a smokefree building! Mention it in your listings, during initial meetings with new residents, around the property, in your newsletter, and anywhere else you can! The more you promote your policy, the more renters will want your product and the less likely they'll be to violate the policy.



If You Have You Already Passed a Policy: *Congratulations!*

To ensure that residents do not violate your smokefree policy, use these tips for high compliance:

- Continually advertise and promote the apartments as smokefree in all advertising media to attract residents who do not smoke or who smoke only outside.
- Contact your local Tobacco Prevention Specialist to include your facility's information on the Montana Smokefree Housing Map.
- Thank residents periodically for high compliance. Consider developing some sort of incentive for high compliance.
- Have consistent enforcement procedures in place. Increasing penalties for each violation of your smokefree policy gives residents a chance to change their behavior before having their lease terminated. Follow through on all complaints and penalties so residents understand that management takes the smokefree policy seriously.

For resources, help or answers to questions, please visit tobaccofree.mt.gov and click on Smokefree Housing.

Or contact:

Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program at **1-866-787-5247** or infotobaccofree@mt.gov.





Sources

- (1) National Cancer Institute. Secondhand Tobacco Smoke (Environmental Tobacco Smoke). 2019. Available from: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/substances/secondhand-smoke>
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- (13) Live Smoke Free. Up in Flames: The Dangers of Smoking in Multi-Unit Housing. 2012. Available from: <https://mnsmokefreehousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Up-in-Flames-The-Dangers-of-Smoking-in-Multi-Unit-Housing.pdf>
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SMOKEFREE PROPERTY



**No smoking, including the
use of e-cigarettes and other
electronic smoking devices.**



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