

How to Implement a No-Smoking Policy

New Buildings: Making a smoke-free policy should be relatively easy in a new building, as your residents will have no pre-existing expectations.

1. **Register** your building(s) on smoke-free registries, such as www.gaspforair.org
2. **Advertise** your units as smoke-free in newspaper and real estate magazine ads.
3. **Revise** your lease/rental agreements to include smoke-free provisions.
4. **Post** “Smoke-Free Area” or “No Smoking” signage in designated areas.
5. **Educate** employees on how to field questions regarding the building’s smoke-free policy.

Existing Buildings: Phase-In

1. **Install** “Smoke-Free Area” or “No Smoking” signage in designated areas. (*See “Make a Plan” below*)
2. **Remove** ashtrays and place receptacles for smoking materials a reasonable distance from facility entrances together with applicable signs.
3. **Discuss** your decision with residents and be sure to get their support.
4. **Announce** the change to all residents in the form of a letter. Require residents to sign a copy stating their intent to comply with the new policy. For existing residents, their understanding and acceptance of the policy will begin upon renewal of their individual leases, which are updated with the new smoke-free lease language.
5. **Educate** employees on how to field questions regarding the building’s smoke-free policy.
6. **Equip** your maintenance staff with proper equipment such as door sweeps and caulking materials to deal with migrating smoke until the phase-in of the policy is complete or if only a portion of the building is going smoke-free.

Tools

Every landlord knows that a good set of tools is important to keep their building in good working order. Here are a few tools to make your transition to a smoke-free environment easier.

1. **Make a plan.** Will you go totally smoke-free, or will certain wings of the building be smoke-free? Start by designating **all** public or community areas smoke-free. (This includes laundry rooms, lobbies, outdoor patios and balconies, recreational facilities, playgrounds, etc.) Then, review the smoking status of existing residents and begin creating smoke-free blocks of units and possibly all-smoking blocks of units.
2. **Hold a Meeting.** Gather with residents to discuss the change. There may be resistance, but remember, all existing residents have rights under their leases, too.
3. **Inform Residents.** Review the legal information concerning your rights and your resident’s rights.
4. **Amend New Leases.** Change the language of your lease to legally include your new smoke-free policy. When new residents sign-on, your policy will be crystal clear.
5. **Promote Your Status.** Begin advertising your smoke-free status to gain new residents who appreciate a clean air environment. You can also post your smoke-free apartment buildings or town homes at www.gaspforair.org.

(Information adapted from www.mismokefreeapartment.org)

Talking to Residents

When you're talking about going smoke-free, it is best to have a clearly organized communication plan for talking to residents. We know you're busy operating your property, so here are some helpful tactics:

- Establish when (*date of enforcement, see "Announce" above*) and where smoking cannot occur (*see "Make a plan" above*). Post "Smoke-free" or "No-Smoking" signs accordingly.
- Decide if improvements need to be made to the existing building (to prevent the passage of drifting secondhand smoke, which can seep through light fixtures, ceiling crawl spaces, windows, shared patio/balcony space, and doorways into all areas of a building).
- Make sure that you are familiar with all aspects of the new smoke-free lease language, especially covenants, conditions, or terms that may prohibit persons living in the building from engaging in disruptive behavior.
- If there is a conflict between residents over secondhand smoke exposure, be open and understanding, but make sure that smokers know that, if necessary, you are willing to restrict or prohibit smoking in the building or area in question if he or she cannot voluntarily solve the problem.

Key Steps for Implementing a No-smoking Policy:

Survey residents and find out:

How many smokers/nonsmokers reside in the building?

Is there a demand for smoke-free/nonsmoking housing/units?

Are residents affected by drifting tobacco smoke?

Do residents support smoke-free policies?

Decide when to make change:

Pick a date (*a warmer month might make it easier for residents who smoke to go outside*).

Change lease provisions upon lease expiration.

Provide a copy of the policy to all residents.

Have residents sign and indicate that they understand the policy.

Post clear signs around the property.

Give residents the same amount of notice as the time period for which they pay rent – 30 to 60 days.

Provide the notice in writing.

Make the smoke-free policy part of the new applicant process or the resident transfer process.

Include enforcement of the "no smoking" policy part of the resident's responsibilities.

Create outdoor smoking areas if desired.

Establish a set of rules for noncompliance (warnings, fines, and eviction policy).

What will this cost?

Policy and Lease Agreement Development: free models and samples are available on this Web site or from GASP of Colorado.

Resident Education & Policy Promotion: photo-copied flyers.

Smoke-free policy signs: free stickers available from [GASP](#) and [STEPP](#).

Smoke-free property: **Priceless!**

www.mysmokefreehousing.org

Sponsored by GASP of Colorado (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution)
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