

Smoke-Free Multiunit Housing



Iowa Department of Public Health, Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control, Smoke-Free Homes Program

1-800-798-0203

Why Not Go Smoke-Free?

Most Iowans Don't Smoke

In Iowa, only 16.1% of adults are smokers.¹ Also, more than 79% of Iowans already have rules against smoking in their homes.²

Iowans Prefer Smoke-Free Housing

According to a 2012 study, nearly 75% of Iowans surveyed said they would choose a smoke-free apartment building. In addition, 46% of all respondents said they would not be interested in living in an apartment building where smoking was allowed. Even among smokers, 44% indicated they would not be interested in living in an apartment building that wasn't smoke free.³

In 2012, nearly 75% of Iowans surveyed said they would choose a smoke-free apartment building.

74.6% Would



21.5% Would not

3.9% Don't Know

Tenants Know about Secondhand Smoke

More than 82 percent of surveyed renters in Iowa already know that exposure to secondhand smoke presents a serious health risk. Also, nearly 27 percent indicate that they are always or sometimes bothered by secondhand smoke that enters their apartment.³ In other words, there's a problem and your tenants know it.

Secondhand smoke cannot be completely controlled by ventilation or air purifiers. A smoke-free policy is the only way to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and protect the health of your tenants.

Even "Sealed Units" Will Leak

Research shows that air flows between units in apartment buildings.⁴ It is virtually impossible to eliminate secondhand smoke from entering, even if steps are taken to "seal" problem areas.

At around \$700 per unit, that's like money flying out the window.⁴ The only way to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke is with a smoke-free policy.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. 2010 Iowa Tobacco Prevalence. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/bfrs/display.asp?cat=1TU&yr=2010&qkey=4396&state=IA>
 2. Iowa Department of Public Health. "Health in Iowa Annual Report: From the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System". 2010. www.idph.state.ia.us/bfrs/common/pdf/2010BRFSSAnnual.pdf
 3. Central Iowa Tobacco Partnership. "Smoke-free Rental Attitudes in Central Iowa." www.tobaccofreepartnership.com/tobacco_resources_multi-unit_housing.php
 4. Center for Energy and Environment. "Reduction of Environmental Tobacco Smoke Transfer in Minnesota Multifamily Buildings Using Air Sealing and Ventilation Treatments." 2004. www.niece.org/getattachment/5ccac6d-4764-4251-9f68-e34293566bab

Benefits of Smoke-Free Buildings

Reduce Operating Costs

Apartment turnover costs can be nearly seven times greater when smoking is allowed. (See chart.)

Some insurance companies offer discounts for having a 100% smoke-free policy.

Be Recognized

Nearly 75% of Iowans surveyed said they would choose a smoke-free apartment building. Property owners and managers with smoke-free policies in Iowa can add their name to the Iowa Smoke-free Housing Registry —the place for prospective tenants to shop for smoke-free options.

Properties with smoke-free policies can request free signage from Iowa's Smoke Free Homes program. Materials include large yard signs to advertise vacancies, permanent metal signs for driveways and buildings, window clings, and more.

Save on Other Expenses

Reduced insurance claims for fire damage means fewer deductibles and lower premiums.

Properties with 100% smoke-free policies spend less on litter control.

Take Advantage of Legal Protection

Lawsuits related to secondhand smoke exposure in housing include those filed under disability laws such as the Fair Housing Act. A smoke-free policy can benefit property owners who might otherwise be subject to legal claims from tenants with pre-existing physical conditions aggravated by secondhand smoke.

Remember that smoking is not a protected activity or right under any state or federal law.

Smoke-Free Homes has a free sample policy addendum that you can use for new and renewed leases.

Cleaning and damage to interior fixtures really affects your bottom line. Here's a comparison.

	Non-Smoking	Light Smoking	Heavy Smoking
General Cleaning	\$ 240	\$ 500	\$ 720
Paint	\$ 170	\$ 225	\$ 480
Flooring	\$ 50	\$ 950	\$ 1,425
Appliances	\$ 60	\$ 75	\$ 490
Bathroom	\$ 40	\$ 60	\$ 400
Total	\$ 560	\$ 1,810	\$ 3,515

Data collected and reported by Smoke-Free Housing New England, 2009.

About Smoke-Free Homes

What is Smoke-Free Homes?

Smoke-Free Homes is a free program provided by the Iowa Department of Public Health. When you work with Smoke-Free Homes to make your buildings 100% smoke-free, you'll have happier tenants, lower cleaning costs, shorter turnover time, and decreased insurance premiums. And we'll achieve our mission of promoting and protecting the health of Iowans.

Smoke-Free Homes also provides education to current and prospective renters, local policy makers, and housing industry professionals about the benefits of smoke-free buildings.

Five Easy Steps and Support from Smoke-Free Homes

- 1. A sample survey** Inform your tenants that you are considering adopting a smoke-free policy. Create a survey or tenant meetings to present your thoughts and gather feedback. Also, our local representative will be happy to attend your tenant meeting.
- 2. A sample letter** Decide whether to use the "phase-in" or the "quit-date" implementation method. Decide on a date for going completely smoke free. Notify tenants 30 to 60 days in advance.
- 3. A sample lease addendum and policy language** Renew existing leases and initiate all new leases with a smoke-free lease addendum or policy.
- 4. Free signs and window clings.** Post signs on your property to remind everyone of the new policy.
- 5. Free Iowa Smoke-Free Housing Registry** to advertise that you have a smoke-free building. Ask Smoke-Free Homes to add your property.

Iowa's Smoke-Free Housing Registry Ranking System

Platinum Entire Property smoke free
Gold All buildings 100% smoke free. All outdoor areas smoke free except designated smoking areas. Smoking areas are at least 25 feet from all buildings.
Silver All buildings 100% smoke free. All outdoor areas within 25 feet of each building are smoke free.
Bronze At least one 100% smoke free building. All balconies and patios smoke free.
Copper At least one 100% smoke free building.