



**SMOKE
FREE**

**MULTI-UNIT
HOUSING**
NORTH-CAROLINA

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Respecting All Points of View

Many housing operators have successfully implemented smoke-free policies, despite having concerns about infringing on individual tenants' rights at the outset. While it is legal for landlords to ban smoking on their property, it's normal to want to implement a policy in a tactful way that will encourage cooperation from smoking residents.

Landlords experienced in adopting smoke-free policies recommend working with smokers throughout the process to get everyone on board. Successful strategies include giving residents enough time to prepare, considering your smoke-free options, and supporting residents who want to quit.

Give Residents Time

Rose Stevens is a manager for RPM in the Piedmont area who took her elderly property smoke-free in 2012. Stevens says:

"I recommend being patient, starting the process early, and listening to residents and giving them as much help as possible."

To gain cooperation from your tenants, you should give them advance notice that the policy is coming. Surveys, letters, and meetings are ways to get your residents' feedback and involve them in the process.

By surveying residents, you can determine how many of them smoke and what they think about smoke-free policies. You may find that fewer residents oppose the policy than you expect.

Consider Your Smoke-Free Options

There are various types of smoke-free policies, and finding the right policy for your property is an important step in going smoke-free. Some operators choose to make their properties 100% smoke-

free, while others choose to prohibit smoking within a certain distance from buildings or only allow smoking within designated areas. Working with residents throughout the implementation process will help inform your decision.

Sally Haile at DHIC says that her company worked with tenants in order to determine locations of designated smoking areas:

“We try to strategically find a place that’s suitable. You don’t satisfy everyone, but we try to be responsive and reevaluate.”

Support Residents Who Want to Quit

Many smokers have tried or are currently trying to quit smoking. In fact, 62% of adult smokers in North Carolina made an attempt to quit in 2011.¹ Supporting residents who want to quit smoking is one way to help your policy change go smoothly.

Rose Stevens held meetings with her smoking residents to discuss ways they could support each other in light of the forthcoming policy. She then invited nurses and mental health specialists to meet with her residents.

You can also provide your residents with information about the North Carolina Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) or other smoking cessation materials. Public health professionals who work at the Health Department or at non-profit organizations in your area may also be willing to speak with residents about quitting smoking.

Smart Tips

- **Prepare for your policy change early**, and involve your residents in the process through meetings, letters, and surveys. Find sample materials at the Smoke-Free Housing Website below.
- **Tailor your policy** to fit the needs of your business and your tenants.
- **Provide resources** for residents who want to quit smoking.

To hear other property owners’ and managers’ stories:

Visit the NC Division of Public Health’s Smoke-Free Housing Website at

<http://www.smokefreehousingnc.com>



State of North Carolina | Department of Health and Human Services |
N.C. Division of Public Health | Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch
www.ncdhhs.gov
N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

¹ http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/state_data/state_highlights/2012/pdfs/states/north_carolina.pdf