



# PROMOTING SMOKE-FREE POLICY COMPLIANCE:

## Tips for Managers



Before the policy has gone into effect, communicate the key policy components below to staff and residents and include them in your policy or lease addendum language:

### A. Policy Details

Define what will be considered “smoking.” Sample definitions<sup>1</sup> to include are:

**“Smoke” or “Smoking”** means inhaling or exhaling smoke, aerosol, or vapor from any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, electronic delivery device, or any other natural or synthetic tobacco or plant product. “Smoke” or “Smoking” also includes burning or possessing any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, electronic delivery device, or any other natural or synthetic tobacco or plant product intended for inhalation.

**“Electronic Smoking Device”** means any product that can be used to deliver aerosolized or vaporized nicotine, lobelia, or any other substance to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an e-cigarette, e-cigar, e-pipe, or vape pen.

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<sup>1</sup> The definitions for “Smoking” and “Electronic Smoking Device” were developed by the Public Health Law Center. <https://publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/tobacco-control/smoke-free-to-bacco-free-places/housing/public-subsidized-housing>

## Outline Policy Coverage:

To maximize the benefits of a smoke-free policy, your policy should cover 100% of the indoors and 25 feet from the building. For a stronger policy, consider including outdoor spaces like garages, playground areas, or the whole property.

## B. What Will Count as a Violation

Explain what will count as an infraction.

Sample infractions<sup>2</sup> to include are:

- Staff witnesses a resident, or a guest of a resident, service provider, relation, or other person smoking in a prohibited area
- Staff finds smoking-related damage to the interior of the unit, which could include burns, tobacco residue on walls and surfaces, clogged plumbing, or compromised ventilation caused by smoking product or products
- Evidence of smoking in a unit such as cigarette or other smoking product smells, cigarette ashes, smoke clogged filters, or damage to the walls or surfaces
- Staff sees a lighted or extinguished smoking product in an ashtray or smoking receptacle inside of a unit
- Repeated reports to staff of violations of the smoking policy by third parties



## C. Enforcement Steps

HUD recommends that PHAs utilize a graduated enforcement plan with at least three steps. Steps should include written warnings and opportunities to meet with PHA staff. At each meeting, culturally appropriate information should be provided about the goals of the policy, how to comply, and where support is

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<sup>2</sup> This language was inspired by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority's Smoke-Free Policy.

available. Consider including an option for remediation. For example, a violation will be removed from a resident's record if they attend a smoking cessation class. Sample graduated enforcement steps<sup>3</sup> to include are:

**First Violation:** Verbal warning, cessation materials, and meeting opportunity

**Second Violation:** Written warning, cessation materials, resident service referral, and meeting

**Third Violation:** Written warning, cessation materials, resident service referral, and meeting

**Fourth Violation:** Notice to vacate with option to remedy, cessation materials, resident service referral, and meeting

**Fifth Violation:** 10-day notice without the option to remedy



**Shortly before and after a policy has gone into effect, perform these on-site activities to foster a smooth transition:**



<sup>3</sup> This language was inspired by the enforcement plan for Home Forward, Portland, OR

## **A. Educate Onsite Staff**

Everyone working on the property should be aware of the policy details, what counts as a violation, and the enforcement protocol. This includes management, maintenance staff, and social services staff.

## **B. Meet with Residents**

Resident meetings are great opportunities to gather feedback, discuss the benefits of going smoke free, how violations will be handled, and answer questions about the policy.

## **C. Provide Educational Resources**

Offer information on the benefits of smoke-free policies and available cessation resources in the management office and community spaces.

## **D. Post Signage**

Display signage anywhere on the property that you don't want smoking to occur. Ask your local smoke-free housing program or health department if free signage is available. Find a smoke-free housing program or access printable signage at [www.smokefreepublichousingproject.org](http://www.smokefreepublichousingproject.org).

## **E. Utilize Appropriate Messaging**

Employ positive, culturally-appropriate messaging. Emphasize that a smoke-free policy promotes a "healthier, safer, cleaner living and work environment" and is based on the activity of smoking in the building, not a person's status as a smoker.

## **F. Inform Residents**

Communicate the policy details and timeline frequently. Advertise it in multiple formats to accommodate various learning styles.

## **G. Distribute In-Unit Reminders**

Providing giveaways (like key chains or refrigerator magnets) are good daily

reminders for residents. Some smoke-free housing programs and local health departments offer free resident reminders for PHAs.

## H. Celebrate

Hold a resident celebration to emphasize the positive benefits that this policy will bring to the community.



## After policy implementation, administer enforcement protocol:

### A. Document Violations Consistently:

Record and collect any evidence of policy violations including witness accounts and pictures of damages. Obtain written accounts from third parties if possible. This information will be important when you discuss a smoking violation with your resident and/or if you need to proceed to eviction.

### B. Enforce the Policy Uniformly:

Every infraction should receive the appropriate enforcement step immediately after the occurrence.

### C. Encourage Staff and Residents to Notify Management of Infractions:

Managers cannot monitor a property 24/7. Ask other on-site staff and residents to notify you when they witness a violation.

### D. Get in Touch with Clean Air for All

For further support and resources, get in touch with Clean Air for All at:

651-646-3005 ext. 301

[info@smokefreepublichousingproject.org](mailto:info@smokefreepublichousingproject.org)

[www.smokefreepublichousingproject.org](http://www.smokefreepublichousingproject.org)

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