

## Secondhand Smoke is a Health Hazard

- Secondhand smoke is the smoke that comes from a lighted tobacco product or from a person who is smoking tobacco. It contains more than 4,000 chemicals. At least 250 of those chemicals are known toxins and more than 50 are cancer-causing chemicals.
- Thousands of people suffer from diseases caused or made worse by secondhand smoke such as asthma, lung cancer, and heart disease.
- Secondhand smoke also causes ear infections, sore throats, watery eyes, and coughing.



## Air Purifiers and Ventilation do not Solve the Problem

- Banning smoking indoors is the only way to fully protect people from the dangers of secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>
- Air purifiers alone won't clean the air or relieve asthma or allergy symptoms. Banning indoor smoking can be more effective than air purifiers.<sup>2</sup>
- Air purifiers should not be relied upon to control health risks from secondhand smoke.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Surgeon General. June 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Consumer Reports. December 2007.

<sup>3</sup>American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, & Air-Conditioning Engineers. June 2005.

## Need More Information?

- [HOME Line](http://www.homelinemn.org): Tenants' advocacy hotline that offers free legal advice. 1-866-866-3546 or [www.homelinemn.org](http://www.homelinemn.org)
- [Minneapolis Housing Services](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs): Information on renters' rights. 612-673-3003 or [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs)
- [Minnesota Attorney General](http://www.ag.state.mn.us): Provides a book about the legal rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. [www.ag.state.mn.us](http://www.ag.state.mn.us)
- [LawHelpMN.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org): Provides fact sheets and information about tenants' rights. [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)
- [Live Smoke Free](http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org): Facts on secondhand smoke, smoke-free housing, and a smoke-free housing directory. [www.mnsmokefreehousing.org](http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org)

### Live Smoke Free



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Office of Tobacco Prevention and Control..

# What to Know Before You Rent



Avoiding secondhand smoke exposure in your apartment



## How Secondhand Smoke Moves Through Apartment Buildings

- An apartment building is one building divided into many units. Smoke can travel into a unit from the hallway, windows, air leaks from other apartments, bathroom or kitchen fans, nearby patios, balconies, or outdoor areas.
- Smoke may travel through holes in walls, gaps along the baseboards, or around light fixtures.
- The path smoke takes through a building is unpredictable. Generally, it will move into units above the source of the smoke. However, research shows that smoke may move side-to-side or even into units below.



## Smoking Causes Apartment Fires

- Cigarette-caused fires often result when a smoker—who may also be impaired by drugs or alcohol, or may have fallen asleep—drops or improperly disposes of a lit cigarette.
- Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the leading cause of residential fire deaths in Minnesota and the United States.

## Renters are Exposed to Smoke

Almost 50% of Minnesota renters say that secondhand smoke gets into their unit from somewhere else in the building. Of those experiencing secondhand smoke in their unit, 37% say it bothers them “a lot” or “so much I’m thinking of moving.”

Smelling smoke in your clothing, bathroom, and living room is more than just annoying. It can have a harmful effect on your health or your children’s health.

## Current Minnesota Law

The Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA) prohibits smoking in all common areas of apartment buildings with three or more rented living units, including hallways, laundry rooms, garages, rental and maintenance offices, building entryways, exercise rooms, indoor pools, and party rooms. Under the MCIAA, landlords are allowed to adopt a smoke-free policy for the entire building.

You have the right to ask if an apartment building is smoke free and the right to see the smoke-free policy in writing.

## Secondhand Smoke and Tenants’ Rights

Tenants could have the right to a smoke-free apartment under Minnesota laws that require the property to be livable and that tenants be able to enjoy the property. If secondhand smoke makes an apartment unlivable or creates a nuisance, tenants may be able to have the problem repaired, be let out of the lease, or receive a reduction in the rent owed.

## Finding a Smoke-Free Apartment

- Search newspapers, apartment magazines, or online services for key words such as “**smoke-free**,” “**non-smoking**,” “**no smk**,” or “**NS**.”
- View a list of Minnesota’s smoke-free apartments at [www.mnsmokefreehousing.org](http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org).
- When you visit an apartment, ask the manager if the building is smoke free. If it is, ask to see the policy in writing. Inspect the building and unit you are renting to be sure it is smoke free. Ask if the previous tenant smoked in the unit.
- Make sure that the smoke-free policy applies to all tenants and guests. Ask how the manager enforces the smoke-free policy.



## Can’t Find a Smoke-Free Building?

- You can reduce the chances of secondhand smoke drifting into your unit by renting an end unit on the lowest floor.
- Ask how the manager handles secondhand smoke problems. Only a small percentage of renters with secondhand smoke problems report them, so the manager may not be aware of the issues.
- If you want to share the benefits of smoke-free housing with the manager, provide him or her with facts from Live Smoke Free, available at [www.mnsmokefreehousing.org](http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org).