



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control



Smoke-Free Housing – As the dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke and the benefits of smoke-free environments have become better understood, so has the demand for smoke-free housing. As of November 2008, over 100 local Housing Authorities nationwide had adopted smoke-free policies for some or all of their apartment buildings.... Letters from multiple HUD field offices, including one from the Chief Counsel in HUD’s Detroit field office, have stated that housing authorities and HUD-subsidized owners may adopt smoke-free house rules without approval from HUD. HUD and its federal partners have the opportunity to facilitate the adoption of smoke-free housing in the immediate future.

As smoke-free housing policies gain momentum among public housing agencies and in local jurisdictions, the Healthy Homes program will work with HUD program offices to encourage smoke-free housing in public and assisted housing and relevant federal partners like CDC and EPA on public health messaging related to eliminating environmental tobacco smoke exposure.

Exposure to ETS, or secondhand smoke, can cause respiratory illness, heart disease, cancer; as well as other adverse health effects (HHS, 2006). Each year in the United States, secondhand smoke exposure is responsible for 150,000 to 300,000 new cases of bronchitis and pneumonia in children aged less than 18 months. Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer. Exposure to ETS kills approximately 46,000 adult nonsmokers from coronary heart disease and 3,000 from lung cancer each year (HHS, 2006). The elderly in particular bear a disproportionate burden of the negative effects of smoking and secondhand smoke. Every major cause of death among the elderly – cancer; heart disease, and stroke – is associated with smoking or secondhand smoke. Overall, it is estimated that approximately 50,000 deaths result annually from exposure to secondhand smoke. (CA EPA, 2006).

(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Leading Our Nation to HealthierHomes: The Healthy Homes Strategic Plan. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, 2009.)