



Addressing Safety Concerns During Smoke-Free Policy Implementation

Resident health and safety are the primary reasons for adopting a smoke-free apartment policy; smoke-free policies reduce fire risk and eliminate secondhand smoke exposure. If residents will be using an outside designated smoking area, the following tips can be utilized by managers and residents to ensure property safety.

Tips for landlords: How you can make your property safer

Work with the residents

- Listen to resident's safety concerns and work together to identify strategies to increase the safety of the building and grounds
- Make sure that all residents are educated on the building's established safety features and protocols
- Help residents organize a community crime watch group

Make improvements to the property

- Visually survey the property; walk the grounds with a local crime prevention officer to identify potentially unsafe areas
- Add signs that say the property is monitored by security
- Consider putting in an alarm system
- Make sure that all entrances and the grounds are well-lit
- Prune trees and shrubs that may block visibility to the designated smoking area
- Be mindful of where designated smoking areas are placed



Tips for renters: How to increase your safety

Talk with your property manager

- Discuss safety concerns with the property manager
- Report suspicious activity to the property manager and the police
- Work with the manager to organize a community watch group

Bring "safety" with you

- If you go outside, do not go alone; take a buddy with you
- Do not bring valuables with you outside
- Bring a cell phone so you can call 9-1-1 if necessary

Be aware of your surroundings

- Be alert; do not be distracted by listening to music or talking on the phone
- Learn to identify "warning" signs that a situation may be unsafe (ie. low visibility, strangers loitering)
- Do not call attention to yourself

Pick a safe time and place to go outside

- Stay in well-lit areas with high visibility
- Do not prop open outside building doors; always lock your unit door and keep perimeter doors closed
- Avoid going outside at night



Local resources for landlords:

- The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a program designed to make multi-unit housing safer; they hold trainings for landlords, perform safety assessments for properties and meet with renters to teach them crime prevention techniques. Learn more: <http://www.mncpa.net/>
- Contact local law enforcement for information and resources about providing a safe environment for your residents.
- Residents may decide to quit smoking after a smoke-free policy is put in place; Minnesota's free smoking cessation program **QuitPlan** can help: www.quitplan.com/ or **1-888-354-PLAN (7526)**.

References

*The tips are from the City of Minneapolis Police Department and the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association

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