



Up in Flames: The Dangers of Smoking in Multi-Unit Housing

Cigarettes and other smoking materials are the **leading** cause of residential fire deaths in Minnesota and the United States.¹ These fires can also result in millions of dollars in damaged property and healthcare costs. Consider adopting a smoke-free policy for the safety of your residents and integrity of your property.

The Cause of Smoking-Related Fires

- Cigarette-caused fires often result when a smoker—who may also be impaired by alcohol or drugs, and may have fallen asleep—drops, abandons, or improperly disposes of a smoldering cigarette. A dropped cigarette can lie in furniture or bed linens and **smolder for up to 30-45 minutes**, causing fire ignition or large amounts of smoke.²
- A dropped, smoldering cigarette can cause smoke which contains **carbon monoxide and other highly toxic gases** that can render people semiconscious or unconscious, putting them at greater risk of injury or death from a fire.²
- Trash, mattresses and bedding, and upholstered furniture are the items most commonly ignited in smoking-material home fires.⁴



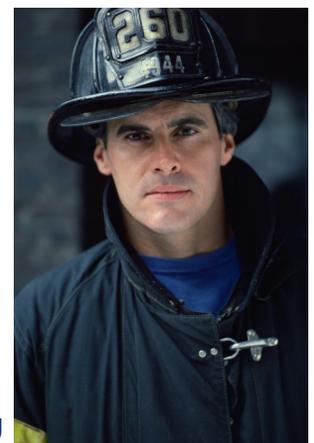
Smoking-Related Fires are Deadly

- Cigarette-caused residential fires result in **almost 1,000 deaths** nationwide each year.¹
- In Minnesota, smoking is consistently the **#1 cause of fire-related death**.³
- **25% of victims** of smoking-related fire fatalities are not the smoker whose cigarettes started the fire.⁵
- Residential smoking fires that injure or kill are **more prevalent at night**. In 2011, 63% of fire deaths in Minnesota in 2011 occurred between the hours of 6pm and 6am.⁸



The Cost of a Smoking-Related Fire

- In 2011, the average dollar loss per multi-family housing fire in Minnesota was over **\$18,000 per incident**.⁸
- A fire caused by careless smoking at an apartment in Burnsville, Minnesota, in June 2007, resulted in **\$1.5 million** in building damage and \$800,000 in personal property damage.⁶
- After a cigarette-caused fire in July 2006, an apartment building in Bloomington, Minnesota spent **nine months** rebuilding and renovating an entire building of 78 units. In order to avoid smoking-related fires and costs in the future, **the building re-opened smoke free** in April 2007.⁷



A Solution to the Problem: Smoke-Free Policies Significantly Reduce the Risk of Fire

- Smoke-free policies in apartments and other multi-unit structures reduce the risk of cigarette-related fires and the subsequent damage, and death they cause by eliminating lighted smoking materials from the interior of the building.

Updated January, 2014

References

¹U.S. Fire Administration, <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/campaigns/smoking/>. 2013.
²Hillel, A. "Regulating Cigarettes for Fire Safety." *Tobacco Control Legal Consortium*. Public Health Law Center, May 2007. Web. Jan. 2013.
³Minnesota Fire Marshal, "Fire in Minnesota: Annual Report," 2012.

⁴Minnesota Fire Marshal, "Fire in Minnesota: Annual Report," 2010.

⁵National Fire Protection Association, "U.S. Smoking-Material Fire Problem," 2012.

⁶WCCO TV, June 21, 2007.

⁷KMSP TV, March 30, 2007.

⁸Minnesota Fire Marshal, "Fire in Minnesota," 2011.

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651-646-3005 • info@mnsmokefreehousing.org
www.mnsmokefreehousing.org

