

Hosting a Resident Meeting on HUD's Smoke-Free Rule

A Guide for Minnesota's Public Housing Providers

Resident education and communication is essential when implementing a smoke-free policy. Holding a resident meeting to answer questions and discuss the harms of secondhand smoke, policy details, and enforcement, is a recommended strategy to ensure successful implementation of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) smoke-free rule.

Resident Meeting Tips

Before the Meeting

- Conduct a resident survey to learn about residents smoking behaviors and opinions and to solicit resident input (see *Live Smoke Free's* "Sample Resident Survey")
- Issue a formal written notice of the new smoke-free rule to all residents (see *Live Smoke Free's* "Sample Resident Notification Letter")
- Encourage attendance
 - Promote the meeting widely – use flyers, emails, newsletter reminders, etc.
 - Offer refreshments
 - Consider making the meeting mandatory
 - Consider holding multiple meetings at various times
- Invite senior leaders from your public housing agency (PHA) to attend and participate
- Reach out to local public health departments and nonprofits for assistance
- Contact 651-646-3005 or info@mnsmokefreehousing.org for more resources or support



During the Meeting

- Use positive messaging
 - Smoke-free policies are about healthy, clean, and safe living for all residents
 - Smoke-free policies prohibit **smoking, not smokers**
 - Review *Live Smoke Free's* "Talking to your Residents about Going Smoke Free" to become familiar with talking points and frequently asked questions from residents and how to respond
- Use plain, everyday language and avoid technical terms and jargon
- Provide translators and translated materials for non-English speaking residents
 - Contact Live Smoke Free for assistance with finding translation resources in Minnesota.
 - Visit <http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org/landlords/links.html> to find select translated materials.
- Utilize visuals such as photos or a slide-show presentation

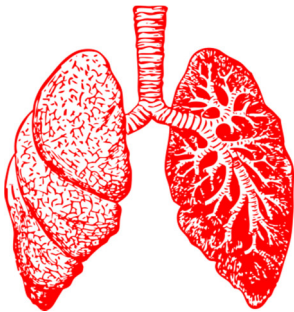
- Be sensitive to the challenges that the rule could pose to people who smoke, but be firm about the importance of protecting all residents from secondhand smoke
- Emphasize that enforcement is the responsibility of the owner/manager to avoid conflict between residents
- Formally record residents questions and comments

Sample Outline

1. Explain HUD’s reasons for adopting a smoke-free rule

- Improve indoor air quality in public housing
- Benefit the health of public housing residents and staff
 - According to the Surgeon General there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke
 - Due to secondhand smoke drift, the only way to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure indoors is to prohibit smoking
- Reduce the risk of catastrophic fires
 - Careless smoking is a leading cause of fire death in Minnesota and the country
 - In 2011, smoking caused 17,600 residential fires resulting in 490 civilian deaths, 1,370 injuries, and \$516 million in property damage
- Lower maintenance costs
 - The extra cost to clean up a unit of a smoker can average \$1,250 to \$2,955

2. Share information on secondhand smoke health effects



- In children, secondhand smoke can cause respiratory infections, ear infections, asthma attacks, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- In adults, secondhand smoke can cause heart disease, cancer, and stroke
- Secondhand smoke can aggravate health conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Secondhand smoke contains lead which is very dangerous for children
- Secondhand smoke can cause health problems for pets, too, such as cancers and breathing problems
- CDC infographic: “Going Smokefree Matters”
<https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/Policy/Going-Smokefree-Matters-Multiunit-Housing-Infograp/d9eu-6czzr/data>

3. Provide the survey results

- In our building ___% of residents support this new rule
- Management will take resident responses into consideration during the planning process

4. Introduce and explain the rule including where smoking will not be allowed

Listed below are items from HUD's smoke-free rule. If your PHA has chosen to prohibit additional tobacco products (such as e-cigarettes) or prohibit use in additional areas (such as playgrounds), communicate those details to residents as well.

- The rule prohibits the use of tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, and hookah
 - Prohibited areas include all indoor areas of public housing
 - Living units
 - Common areas
 - Electrical closets
 - Storage units
 - Administrative office buildings
 - Outdoor areas within 25 feet of the housing and administrative office building
 - Other:
-

5. Explain how the rule will be enforced

Enforcement of the smoke-free rule is at the discretion of the PHA. HUD did not include enforcement provisions in the rule. Below is a sample enforcement plan.

- The smoke-free rule will be enforced in the same manner as all other rules
 - First violation: _____
 - Second violation: _____
 - Third violation: _____
 - Fourth violation: _____
- The following will be considered evidence of a violation: _____

6. Inform residents of the implementation plan and anticipated timeline

If your PHA is implementing the rule via a lease addendum, see below.

- On **[date for new residents]**, all residents signing a new lease will be required to sign a smoke-free lease addendum
- All current residents will be required to sign a smoke-free lease addendum during their recertification process
- The transition to becoming a smoke-free building will be completed by **[date all residents will have signed smoke-free lease addendum]**

If your PHA is implementing the rule via a House Rules change, see below

- The smoke-free rule will be incorporated into our House Rules will take effect on **[date]** for all residents

7. Explain what cessation resources will be available

- QUITPLAN® Services offers free help to quit smoking for Minnesota adults regardless of insurance status

- 2 weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy (such as patches or gum)
- Email and text message support
- Quit Guide book
- Phone coaching (available to those who are uninsured or underinsured)
- Most health insurance providers cover some type of cessation service
- Minnesotans on MinnesotaCare or Medical Assistance can receive free tobacco treatment



8. Open the meeting up for comments and questions

Contact Live Smoke Free at info@mnsmokefreehousing.org or 651-656-3005 for additional assistance. Depending on your geographic location, we may connect you with a partner who can provide local assistance.

More information available at:

www.sfpublichousingmn.org

https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes/smokefree

Reproducible with permission