



Secondhand Smoke and Smoke-free Policies in Multi-Unit Housing

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH) and Live Smoke (LSF) conducted a resident survey in multi-unit housing apartment buildings in Ramsey County. SPRCPH was interested in learning about smoking in apartments and what residents thought about secondhand smoke and smoke-free policies including citywide smoke-free policy.

According to Surgeon General’s Report, 2.5 million adults who were nonsmokers died due to health complications caused or exacerbated by exposure to secondhand smoke.¹ Ramsey County is estimated to contain 220,680 housing units, 59.3% of which are owner occupied.²

This resident survey was conducted from 02/04/2019 to 10/23/2019 and was administered in two types of multi-unit housing properties throughout Ramsey County: those with a smoke-free policy and those without a smoke-free policy. The response rate was 35%, with 518 completions.

Secondhand smoke exposure is a leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. Secondhand smoke, classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a Group A carcinogen, contains more than 7,000 chemicals.¹



86%

do not allow smoking in their units in smoking-permitted buildings.

47%

are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke in their units.

97%

do not allow smoking in their units in smoke-free properties. This includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, water or regular pipes, hookahs and bidis.



Respondents with lower incomes or who identified as people of color were over represented in smoking-permitted properties.

A majority of respondents surveyed (79%) support a property-wide smoke-free policy for their smoking-permitted property.

79%

respondents in subsidized apartments support smoke-free policy.

75%

respondents in market-rate apartments support smoke-free policy.

Categories	Smoke free	Smoking permitted
Housing cost	97%	96%
Proximity to work or school	85%	79%
Smoke free policy	68%	64%
Transportation	66%	75%
Good school district	35%	42%

Table #1: Top consideration when looking for an apartment



Respondents who supported city-wide smoke-free policy buildings provided reasons including:

- Smoking is a public health concern for all
- Damages paint, carpet, air ducts; more difficult to remove than ever having it.
- Smoking causes lung cancer
- For kids. I don't want my kids to be exposed to smoke.
- Because I have asthma and so does my daughter

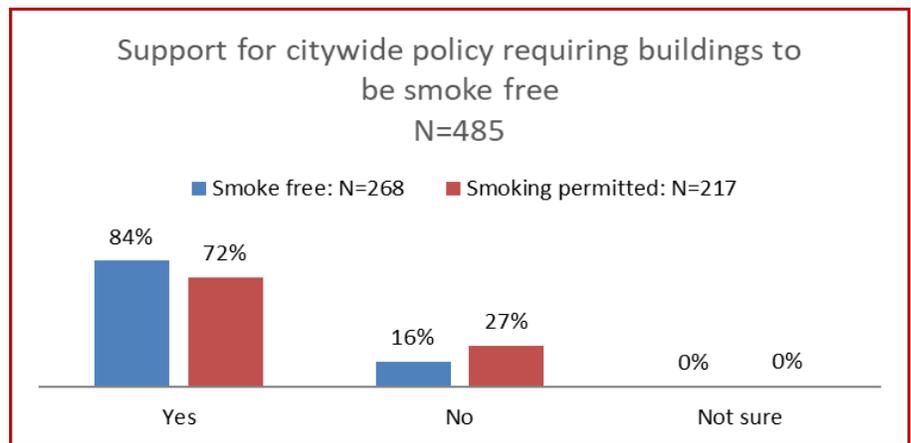


Chart #1: Respondents in smoking-permitted and smoke-free buildings in support of smoke-

The 2019 study was conducted by Live Smoke Free Program. This work is made possible through grant funding from the Statewide Health Improvement partnership (SHIP) of the Minnesota Department of Health and Saint Paul— Ramsey County Public Health

¹Environmental Protection Agency. Accessed February 17, 2020. <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/secondhand-smoke-and-smoke-free-homes>
²United State Census Bureau Quick Facts Ramsey County V2018

Live Smoke Free
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