

# BREATHING SMOKE-FREE AIR IS A RIGHT

## Adopting Smoke-Free Policies can Protect Vermonters

Vermonters in multi-unit homes are concerned about secondhand smoke and are unable to protect themselves if other residents are smoking. If a smoke-free policy is not in place, residents could be exposed to secondhand smoke even if they don't allow smoking in their own homes. More than one in three Vermonters in multi-unit homes report exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>



Vermonters who live in multi-unit housing have shared stories of being exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes.



### Smoking outside in common areas can contribute to exposure.

A Vermonter in Brandon shares their continued exposure to secondhand smoke, stating that other residents smoke below open windows and in the parking lot.

**“Too many in the building have a hard time breathing and should not be subjected to secondhand smoke in our apartments.”**



### Secondhand smoke exposure can damage your property.

A Vermonter who owns a condo in Burlington shared that their neighbors smoke cigarettes, leading to property damage in their unit.

**“Smoke is travelling through the walls and attic.”**



### Older Vermonters and those with health conditions are most vulnerable.

An older adult in Bennington, who is a cancer patient in remission, struggles due to other residents smoking in the hallways and next door.

**“It's very hard to breathe ... [smoke] comes through the walls.”**

Contact Us



(802) 863-7330



tobaccovt@tobacco.gov

# Smoke-free Policies are **Better for Business** and **Healthier for Residents.**

## Less costly and quicker turnover of units.

Turning over units that have been smoked in can cost hundreds of dollars more compared to units that are smoke-free.<sup>2</sup> Fewer repairs also means less time spent on apartment turnover.



## Lower vacancy rates and fewer resident complaints.

Most Vermonters (90%) agree with no smoking rules at home.<sup>1</sup> But people in multi-unit housing could still be exposed to secondhand smoke if others are smoking on the premises. Property managers and owners have shared that going smoke free led to fewer vacancies and resident complaints.<sup>3</sup>






## Lower health risks for residents.

Secondhand smoke exposure increases the risk of lung cancer and death from heart disease in adults. Among children, secondhand smoke exposure increases the likelihood of sudden infant death syndrome and respiratory illnesses.<sup>4</sup> Read more about the health risks at [HealthVermont.gov](https://www.healthvermont.gov).



## Ready to go smoke free?

-  If yes, visit the [Vermont Smoke- and Vape-Free Housing page](#), which includes resources like lease addenda, signs, enforcement help, and more. For quit resources, visit [802Quits.org](https://www.802quits.org).
-  If no, read more on how going smoke-free reduces operating expenses, limits property owners' legal liability, and lowers fire risk ([Smoke- and Vape- Free Housing Toolkit](#), pages 3-4).
-  Recently went smoke free? Check out the [Year After Guide](#) to know what to expect in the year after adopting smoke-free policies.

## References

- Vermont Department of Health. (2024). 2022 Vermont adult tobacco survey report. Retrieved from: [https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/HSI\\_2022\\_VT\\_ATS\\_Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/document/HSI_2022_VT_ATS_Report_0.pdf)
- Public Health Law Center. (2021). *Regulating smoking in multi-unit housing*. Retrieved from: <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Regulating-Smoking-in-MUH.pdf>
- Kegler, M. C., Lewbow-Skelley, E., Lea, J., Haardorfer, R., Lefevre, A. Diggs P., et al. (2019). A qualitative study of the process of adoption implementation and enforcement of smoke-free policies in privately-owned affordable housing. *BMC Public Health*, 19, 1071. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7404-y>
- Office on Smoking and Health (US). *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2006. 1, Introduction, Summary, and Conclusions. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44328/>