



# CLEAR THE AIR. ONE STEP AT A TIME.

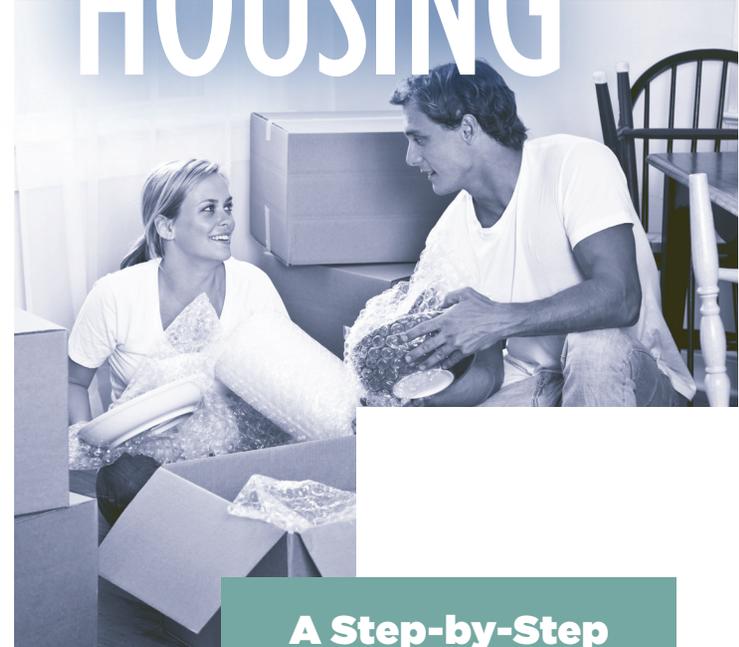
Whether living in an apartment, duplex or condominium, you have the right to expect a smokefree environment. Unfortunately, residents of multiunit housing are frequently exposed to secondhand smoke from fellow tenants. This guide offers facts and suggestions to help you eliminate hazardous tobacco smoke from your home and surroundings.



# SMOKEFREE HOUSING



If you have an immediate problem with secondhand smoke pollution in your residence, request relief from your landlord or property manager. Additional information is available in the brochure "Remedies for Tenants Exposed to Secondhand Smoke" which may be found at [www.BreatheEasyOK.com](http://www.BreatheEasyOK.com).



**A Step-by-Step  
Guide for Tenants**



### Step 1: Understand the risks.

- Secondhand smoke (SHS) is a Class A carcinogen. Like radon and asbestos, prolonged exposure to secondhand smoke is known to cause cancer in both humans and domestic animals.
- SHS contains a cocktail of deadly chemicals including radioactive polonium, hydrogen cyanide, arsenic and formaldehyde.
- In addition to cancer, secondhand smoke causes a spectrum of serious illnesses including asthma, sinus infections, ear infections, chronic cough, sudden infant death syndrome and heart disease.
- SHS cannot be contained in a single housing unit. It seeps into nearby dwellings, balconies, breezeways and common areas. Secondhand smoke infiltrates surrounding units through open doors, shared heating/ventilation, around doors, even through lighting fixtures, cracks in walls, or around plumbing.
- According to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure.

### Step 2: Know the law.

- Oklahoma law prohibits smoking in most indoor workplaces. That covers the offices and common areas of apartment buildings but does not protect spaces within apartments. Generally, nonsmoking housing policies are not a matter of law. Tenants and landlords should work together to craft their own nonsmoking strategies.

### Remember:

- You **CAN** work to achieve smokefree policies for your building or complex.
- It is perfectly legal for landlords and management companies to implement smokefree policies on their properties. This standard applies to both private-market and public housing.
- If you have a serious, pre-existing condition such as heart disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, asthma, or lung cancer which is made worse by secondhand smoke, you may be eligible to file a disability complaint with a state or federal agency, which could require a landlord to provide you with 'reasonable accommodation.'

### Step 3: Politely address the issue.

- Many times, smokers are not aware a problem exists. Address the issue in a friendly, non-accusatory manner and offer constructive solutions.

### Step 4: Propose a nonsmoking policy to your landlord.

- If you feel a smokefree policy is necessary, call, email, or meet with your landlord in person. Propose a smokefree policy that covers your building and surrounding areas, at minimum. Keep the conversation positive, focusing on your health needs and the benefits of going smokefree.
- The proposed policy should include balconies and prohibit smoking within 25 feet of entrances, air intakes, and windows that can open. Ideally, it should cover the entire complex. The nonsmoking policy can be incorporated into each lease in a nonsmoking building, usually over the course of a year.

### Step 5: Partner with like-minded residents.

- Increase your chances of success by educating neighbors and fellow tenants about the benefits of smokefree housing. Partner with neighbors to encourage the adoption of the smokefree policy.
- Create a list of residents who want a smoke-free policy. The list should include names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
- Hold meetings with fellow residents to develop an action plan and draft language of a nonsmoking policy.
- Send a polite letter to your landlord requesting the implementation of your proposed policy, and/or a meeting to express your desires.

