

Presented by:

Comprehensive Health  
Education Foundation  
&

Pacific Northwest Regional  
Council of NAHRO

In partnership with the  
WA State Department of  
Health

# No Smoking Policies for Section 8 Landlords (Guidance for Section 8 Staff)

Thursday, January 16, 2014 (2:30-3:30 PM)

**Julie Peterson, CHEF**

**Ron Oldham, PNRC-NAHRO**

**Dianne Quast, Consultant**



# Introduction

---



## Why involve Section 8 staff in encouraging no smoking policies?

- Staff have opportunities to recommend the benefits of no smoking policies & properties to landlords of 46,000 HCV units
  - At leasing, lease renewal, HQS inspections
- Purpose of this webinar is to provide information, talking points to share if the opportunity arises
- Think of it as a “60 second elevator” speech (a tool used by advocates to get an idea/concept across in a very short period of time) for no smoking policies. More on this later....

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



*The following information & related documents are available for landlords on CHEF's website [ [www.chef.org](http://www.chef.org) ] under "Tobacco Prevention Network" on the left side of the homepage.*

*A flyer about this website has already been distributed to Sec. 8 landlords encouraging them to go to this website for the guidance posted there...*

# Smoke-Free Units are Easier to Rent

Section 8 landlords across Washington are adopting no-smoking policies. Most renters (92%) prefer no-smoking units—including 75% of smokers!

- ✓ Save money on cleaning and renovation
- ✓ Preserve resale value
- ✓ Prevent fire and smoke damage

Everything you need to know about going smoke-free is available here—sample policies, lease addendums, quitline resources for your tenants:



[www.chef.org/HealthEquityPartners/TobaccoPrevention/tabid/99/Default.aspx](http://www.chef.org/HealthEquityPartners/TobaccoPrevention/tabid/99/Default.aspx)

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



How does going  
smoke-free benefit  
landlords?

1. It's a wise business decision that saves landlords money.
2. It helps landlords to insure that the rental premises that they provide are a safe living environment

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



## Protect the property's value

- Damage from tobacco smoke can be a “deal-breaker” for prospective buyers, or
- Can reduce the sales price

## Save money on vacate renovations

- Units that are smoked in are more costly to renovate
- 2 to 15 times more expensive than non-smokers' units, depending on length of occupancy by a smoker

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



- Save money on insurance
  - Some insurers offer a discount for no smoking properties (CIG – 10%).
  - With no smoking policies, insurance costs may decline in future years.
- Prevent fires
  - In 2010, 610 deaths, 1,570 injuries, & \$663 million in property damage due to smoking related fires.

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



- Fulfill the obligation to protect tenants from 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand smoke
  - 49,000+ adult deaths/year in non-smokers
  - Major contributor to health problems in children (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)
  - “... a serious health hazard that can lead to disease & premature death in children & non-smoking adults.” (U.S. Surgeon General, 2006)
  - Impossible to contain in one unit or area (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers)
  - Tenants with medical conditions are protected by the ADA and Fair Housing laws

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



## Good for business

- 92% of WA renters prefer smoke-free housing, including 75% of smokers (WA State Landlord & Owner Survey)
- Curb appeal is greater
- Vacancies will rent sooner without tobacco smoke odor/residue (and are cheaper to “turn”)

## Fewer complaints

- 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand smoke is one of the most common sources of tenant complaints

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



What about competing  
with other rentals?

- 92% reported no impact on occupancy rates\*
- 31 of 38 housing authorities in WA have adopted no smoking policies, but few have lost tenants; private landlords have had similar experience
- Larger pool of potential renters
- 95% of landlords satisfied with no smoking rules\*

*\* 2012 WA State Owner & Property Manager Survey*

# Benefits of a No Smoking Policy

---



What about tenants  
who smoke now?

- No legal right to smoke; right to privacy does not apply
- Landlords can prohibit dangerous, harmful behavior
- It's not telling tenants they can't smoke, just that they can't do it in your rental property

# Enforcement of a No Smoking Policy

---



Is a No Smoking Policy  
difficult to enforce?

- A common concern among landlords
- Experience is that it is largely self-enforcing
- Violations handled as any other variance from occupancy rules
- Adopters: “the long-term benefits are worth the initial implementation & ongoing enforcement”

# Implementation Options

---



1. 100% smoke-free from opening of a new building
2. Policy covers entire property or just interior?
3. Multiple buildings or properties? Some or all?
4. 100% no smoking after proper notice? (may need to phase in at lease renewal)
5. New tenants not allowed to smoke; current tenants must comply at lease renewal
6. Grandfather existing tenants until vacate; new tenants may not smoke
7. Allow smokers to move to other properties where smoking is permitted, if available

# Points to Consider

---



- Smoking is very addictive.
- Communication with tenants is critical
- Comprehensive tenant survey
- Offer smokers help with quitting
- Give lots of notice (more than legally required)

# Points to Consider

---



## Recommended steps to implementation

Use written notification including:

- Areas where smoking is prohibited (or allowed if any?)
- Who is covered by the no smoking policy
- Definitions of terms
- The effective date
- Consequences for non-compliance

# Points to Consider

---



- After effective date leases must include policy
- For current tenants, add the policy at lease renewal
- For month-to-month leases, only 30 days notice of rule changes is required
- Ask every tenant to acknowledge the no smoking policy by initialing the new lease

# Marijuana?

---



- Smoking marijuana, like tobacco, creates potentially harmful 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand smoke .
- Landlords may prohibit the smoking of any substance on their premises.
- Other ways to use marijuana.
- It's not the marijuana, it's smoking it in a residential property!

# Results of a No Smoking Policy

---



Study of properties managed by a large NW management firm found 1 year after implementation\*:

- Nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of tenants were happy with policy
- 30% of smokers agreed
- 43% of smokers reported smoking less
- Nearly 50% of smokers reported one quit attempt
- Rate of smokers who quit went from 2% to 14%
- Those who reported no longer exposed to SHS increased by 75%; complaints about SHS decreased
- Fire risk was reduced
- Cleaning; painting costs decreased

*\*(Implementation of a Smoke Free Policy in Subsidized Multi-Unit Housing, Pizacani, 2012)*

# Where to Send Tenants Who Want Help Quitting?



Helping tenants quit may not be in a landlord's job description, but it helps to achieve a smoke-free property

- American Lung Association  
[www.lung.org/stop-smoking](http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking)
- WA State Quit Line (1-800 QUITNOW)
  - Everyone gets one free call
  - Services can usually be covered through private health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare

# Information About 2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Smoke in Multi-Family Properties

---



CHEF has posted the following at [www.chef.org](http://www.chef.org) for use by Section 8 landlords:

- “A Landlord’s Guide to No-Smoking Policies”
- “Reasons to Explore Smoke-Free Housing”
- “Infiltration of Secondhand Smoke into Condominiums, Apartments, & Other Multi-Unit Dwellings,” and
- “There is No Constitutional Right to Smoke, 2008”

# The Elevator Speech

---



Earlier we mentioned “an elevator speech,” a tool by which you can convey an idea or position to someone in a very short period of time.

*Here’s the no smoking elevator speech for Section 8 landlords:*

- Have you thought about a no smoking policy for your rental property?
- There are 2 general benefits to having a no smoking policy
  - They are a wise business decision
  - They help to insure a safe living environment for tenants

# The Elevator Speech

---



- Smoke-free rental properties are a great marketing tool since most renters want a smoke-free environment
- Housing authorities & landlords who have no smoking policies are realizing cost savings in
  - Unit turns
  - General maintenance
  - Insurance costs and fire losses
- There are resources available on the CHEF website with more information about implementing a no smoking policy for your property

*A copy of this elevator speech is posted on CHEF's website ([www.chef.org](http://www.chef.org)) for Section 8 staff to download and copy onto a card sized piece of paper.*

# Technical Assistance

---



This slide presentation will also be posted on the website. CHEF partners are available to conduct group trainings for Section 8 landlords requested by their housing authority through March 27, 2014.

Ron Oldham

206-901-0330

[RONALDLOLDHAM@MSN.COM](mailto:RONALDLOLDHAM@MSN.COM)

Dianne Quast

503-969-9146

[DIANNEQUAST@CENTURYLINK.NET](mailto:DIANNEQUAST@CENTURYLINK.NET)

This webinar has  
been  
funded by the WA  
State Department of  
Health

Thank you for participating in this webinar.

We hope that it will  
allow you to reach out to Section 8  
landlords about this very important  
policy issue that can affect tens of  
thousands of Section 8 households!

**Questions?**

**SMOKE-FREE  
HOUSING**