

# Smoking Restrictions in Multi-Family Housing

Last Updated: 08/20/2015

## Scope

Reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) in multi-family buildings by: \_\_\_\_\_

- Prohibiting smoking in indoor common areas
- Locating designated outdoor smoking areas 25 feet from entries.
- Air sealing to minimize the spread of tobacco smoke between units.

### DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Program Notes

[DOE Zero Energy Ready Home](#) Exhibit 1, Item 6 “Indoor Air Quality” requires that builders meet the [EPA Indoor airPLUS Verification Checklist](#) and [Construction Specifications](#).

The Indoor airPLUS Verification Checklist (Version 1 Rev. 02) states:

5.3 Reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) in multi-family buildings by:

- Prohibiting smoking in indoor common areas, specified explicitly in building rental/lease agreements or condo/co-op association covenants and restrictions.
- Locating designated outdoor smoking areas a minimum of 25 ft. from entries, outdoor air intakes and operable windows.
- Minimizing uncontrolled pathways for ETS transfer between individual dwelling units by sealing penetrations in the walls, ceilings and floors of dwelling units; sealing vertical chases adjacent to dwelling units; and applying weather stripping to all doors in dwelling units leading to common hallways.



**No Smoking  
within  
25 feet of building**

## Description

Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), also known as secondhand smoke, is a mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the smoke exhaled by smokers. ETS contains over 4,000 substances, several of which are known to cause cancer in humans or animals (U.S. EPA).

ETS has been identified as a human lung carcinogen by EPA and also classified as a Group A carcinogen under EPA's carcinogen assessment guidelines. ETS is also responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths annually among nonsmoking adults in U.S. In a number of studies, ETS exposure has also been shown to increase the risk of heart disease (U.S. EPA 1992).

Exposure to ETS can also adversely affect respiratory health in children and can cause asthma in children who have not previously exhibited symptoms. Additionally, ETS exposure in children increases the risks for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, middle ear infections, and lower respiratory tract infections (such as pneumonia and bronchitis). EPA estimates that 150,000 to 300,000 cases of lower respiratory tract infections in infants and children up to 18 months of age can be attributed to ETS exposure (U.S. EPA 1992).

In multifamily buildings, ETS can be transferred into individual dwelling units through gaps and openings in walls, ceilings, and floors.

Eliminating ETS through a building-wide smoke-free policy is the most effective, and cost efficient, method of controlling ETS. There is no safe level of ETS exposure and no engineering technique can completely eliminate ETS infiltration.

Where eliminating smoking in new multifamily buildings is not immediately feasible, Indoor airPLUS requires that smoking be prohibited in all indoor common areas. Indoor airPLUS also requires that outdoor smoking areas be located a minimum of 25 feet from building entries, outdoor air intakes and operable windows. This restriction can be communicated through signage and building policies.

In order to minimize ETS infiltration between units, penetrations in the walls, ceilings, and floors of dwelling units should be sealed with appropriate materials. Vertical chases adjacent to dwelling units should also be fully sealed. All doors in dwelling units leading to common hallways should have weather stripping.

For more information about air sealing see the following guides:

- [Doors Adjacent to Unconditioned Space](#)
- [Multifamily Party Walls](#)
- [Plates/Blocking at Top of Walls Adjoining Unconditioned Spaces](#)
- [Shafts \(e.g., Duct, Flue\)](#)
- [Sill Plate](#)

## Ensuring Success

Building owners should establish a no-smoking policy that is clearly outlined in rental contracts.

Signs should be posted at all entrances indicating that smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of entryways, outdoor air intakes, and operable windows.

# Climate

No climate specific information applies.

# Training

Right and Wrong Images

None Available

# CAD

None Available

# Compliance

The Compliance tab contains both program and code information. Exact code language is copyrighted and may require purchase from the publisher. While we continually update our database, links may have changed since posting. Please contact our webmaster if you find broken links.

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## More Info.

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### Case Studies

None Available

### References and Resources\*

1. [Change Is In the Air](#)  
**Author(s):** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**Organization(s):** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**Publication Date:** October, 2014  
*This is a guide for establishing smoke-free policies in public housing and multifamily properties.*
2. [Health Effects of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke](#)  
**Author(s):** EPA  
**Organization(s):** EPA  
**Publication Date:** November, 2011  
*This report describes the health effects of secondhand smoke.*
3. [Healthy Homes Manual on Smoke-Free Policies in Multiunit Housing](#)  
**Author(s):** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
**Organization(s):** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
**Publication Date:** August, 2011  
*This manual is designed for state and local healthy homes programs that are working to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in multiunit housing. The manual provides field-tested strategies, recommendations, best practices, and tools.*
4. [Smoke-Free Multifamily Housing](#)  
**Author(s):** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**Organization(s):** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**Publication Date:** August, 2015  
*Toolkits for residents and owner/managers who live and work in federally assisted housing.*

\*Publication dates are shown for formal documents. Dates are not shown for non-dated media. Access dates for referenced, non-dated media, such as web sites, are shown in the measure guide text.

### Contributors to this Guide

The following Building America Teams contributed to the content in this Guide.

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