

How to Change to be Smoke-Free

By GASP of NE, Inc.

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1. Survey your tenants. Conduct a survey to find out how many tenants smoke in their apartments and how they view a smoke-free policy in your building(s). Use the survey to determine if any patterns emerge. Are the no-smoking apartments clustered in buildings, wings, or floors? Use these patterns to decide which buildings or areas you will make smoke-free first.

2. Determine a budget for incentives. You could raise the rent in your smoke-free buildings because a significant number of renters say they will pay more to live in a smoke-free building. You can speed up the move toward smoke-free buildings by offering incentives to tenants to move to other floors, wings or buildings. Incentives aren't necessary - you can simply change the policy and implement it with proper notice. Tenants who don't like the new policy can move at the end of their lease making room for new tenants who will appreciate a healthier environment.

3. Set a time frame for the change. Check the date that your leases are due for renewal. If your tenants are on month-to-month leases, you can make changes relatively quickly. All you have to do is give one month's notice of changes in policy. If your tenants are on leases, notify them of the changes in policy at least one month prior to their renewal date.

4. Notify tenants of your plans. Well ahead of your target date, notify tenants of your smoke-free policy. Provide them with your reasons to be smoke-free which typically include a combination of health, safety and business concerns. You could be clear that the policy you are implementing prohibits smoking, not smokers. Or, if you want to, you could not rent to people who smoke, just like you can not rent to people who own a cat.

5. Make tenants aware of community cessation services. Many community agencies and organizations offer cessation classes, groups and counseling sessions. Nebraska's Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, is free and anonymous cessation counseling for all Nebraskans.

6. Introduce new leases or addendums. You should include some language in your leases that makes tenants aware of their obligation not to smoke in their unit and the consequences if they do not meet these obligations. Make sure that residents also know whom to call if they suspect a violation of the policy. GASP has a draft smoke-free rental addendum on our website.

7. Post signs. A few days before the building becomes smoke-free, send out an announcement to tenants and employees and post "NO SMOKING BUILDING" signs at the entryways.

For More Information on Implementing a Smoke-Free Policy contact GASP from our Contact Page on our website at www.SmokeFreeNebraska.org.