

# Steps to Creating a Smoke-Free Property

While it is ideal to implement a smoke-free policy in a new building, an existing building or complex can be converted with some planning and preparation. Use the following five steps to create a plan to make your property smoke-free.

**1. Get tenant input.** Including tenants in the process can build support and help prepare for the transition:

- Start by talking to tenants about your plan to go smoke-free. Include them in the decision – chances are the majority of them already prefer smoke-free housing.
- Consider conducting a survey to get input from tenants about their preferences. Assess how many tenants are bothered by secondhand smoke, how many smoke, how many smoke inside, or how many would be willing to move so you can designate smoking and non-smoking buildings. See **Sample Tenant Survey**.
- Provide talking points to staff to help them start talking about the benefits of going smoke-free.
- If appropriate, hold a meeting. Gather with tenants to discuss the change.
- See **Facts about Secondhand Smoke**.

**2. Choose a transition plan.** There are many ways to phase-in a policy. Consider one of the following options:

- Make units non-smoking as new tenants move in.
- As leases turn over, have current tenants sign a non-smoking lease addendum.
- Grandfather current tenants until they move out.
- “Go smoke-free” after a certain date by following landlord-tenant law requirements, including giving advance notice and having tenants agree to the changes in writing. (over)

**3. Develop your policy.** You'll want to be as specific as possible in your new policy. Consider the details of your new policy in advance:

- Where smoking is and is not allowed (indoors and out)
- Who the policy applies to (tenants, guests, staff, service persons)
- The definition of smoking
- Effective dates for new and current tenants
- Consequences for violations
- Whether to have a designated outdoor smoking area at least 25 feet away from the building and common areas
- See **Sample Lease Addendum (2)**

**4. Give notice and set a date.** Help tenants prepare for the transition by taking a few easy steps:

- Give at least 30 days notice. A longer period gives people more time to adapt, thereby improving compliance.
- Distribute a resident notification letter to announce the change. See **Sample Notification Letter** for tenants.
- Advertise your new smoke-free units!
- Have tenants sign a lease addendum on the date you go smoke-free, or upon lease renewal.
- Prepare cessation resources for interested tenants. Start by visiting [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com) or call 1-866-NY-QUITS.

**5. Enforce your policy.** You can enforce your smoke-free policy like any other rule:

- Include it in the rental agreement
- Tell tenants about it during the application phase and at move-in
- Post signs and stickers
- Hold tenants financially responsible for bringing the unit back to its original condition
- Visit the property and perform inspections
- Respond promptly to complaints about violations
- Use a system of warning letters and eviction procedures when tenants don't comply. See a **Sample Warning Letter** for tenants.