

# Addressing Secondhand Smoke

HACB Resident Advisory Board, 3-4-17

# Why Address Secondhand Smoke

- \* *Secondhand smoke is deadly*
- \* *Secondhand smoke drifts*
- \* *Secondhand smoke increases cleaning costs and property damage*
- \* *Smoking is a fire hazard*



# Secondhand Smoke is Deadly

- \* There is no risk free exposure to second hand smoke!
- \* Secondhand smoke is classified as a Group A Carcinogen
- \* There are over 4,000 chemicals in secondhand smoke, 250 of those are known carcinogens
- \* Secondhand smoke can cause or worsen: bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections and asthma
- \* Increases heart disease risk by 25-30%

# Secondhand Smoke Drifts

- \* Smoke travels through apartments by moving up, down, side-to-side
- \* Small gaps between units allow for smoke to travel
- \* Up to 65% of the air in a building is shared between units





# Smoking is a Fire Hazard

- \* Apartments account for a larger share of smoking related fires than any other type of residence in the United States.
- \* 25% of victims who die from smoking-related fires were not the smoker that caused the fire.
- \* The average dollar loss per multi-unit housing fire was nearly \$44,000 per incident in 2010.
- \* Property damage is not only caused by the fire's flames, but also by the smoke and sprinkler systems.

# Smoke Free Housing Reduces Cleaning and Property Costs

- \* When a unit has been smoked in turnover cleaning for a new tenant increases.
- \* Nicotine adheres to surfaces and collects grime, dust and other particles. Leaving behind a yellow brown color.

	Non-Smoking	Light Smoking	Heavy Smoking
General Cleaning	\$240	\$500	\$720
Paint	\$170	\$225	\$480
Flooring	\$50	\$950	\$1,425
Appliances	\$60	\$75	\$490
Bathroom	\$40	\$60	\$400
Total	\$560	\$1,810	\$3,515

# Property Damage



# Smoking Policy at any Public Housing Complex

- \* Smoking and use of tobacco or other substances shall be prohibited throughout the entire apartment complex.
- \* This policy applies to all residents, guests, visitors, service personnel and employees.
- \* Failure to comply with this policy is a violation of the lease agreement and grounds for evictions. Violators will be responsible for damage, maintenance and cleaning due to smoking violations.



# How to Handle a Smoking Neighbor

- \* Keep a log/record documenting when smoke enters your unit.
- \* Create a list of attempted solutions
- \* Talk with your neighbors
- \* Write a letter to your property manager
- \* Follow up

# Keep a log/record documenting when smoke enters your unit

- \* Where is the smoke coming from?
  - \* The bathroom, the bedroom, the front door, etc.
- \* How bad is it?
  - \* Use a scale 1-5
- \* Are there any health effects noticed?
  - \* A coughing fit, watery eyes, an asthma attack
- \* How long does the exposure last?
  - \* One hour, five hours, all day



# Create a List of Attempted Solutions

- \* Examples: Running fans, blocking gaps in walls
- \* Temporary solutions help illustrate the severity of the problem
- \* Put you ahead of the game if the manager suggests these solutions



# Talk with Neighbors

- \* Talk!
- \* The smoker may not realize their smoke is an issue.
- \* Other neighbors might be experiencing the same issues and are willing to share their stories.
- \* This can be uncomfortable but it is important to speak with the smoker first to attempt to resolve the problem.
- \* Track resolution efforts in your log.

# Write a Letter to Property Manager

- \* Explain the problem in detail and offer solutions.
- \* Include any letters from doctors explaining that the smoke has a health impact.
- \* Keep all copies of the correspondence.
- \* Send a letter to your Resident Advisory Board if you have one.



# Follow up With a Phone Call

- \* Call your property manager and follow up on the status of your letter.
- \* Track calls in your log.



# Be Prepared for Possible Outcomes

- \* Renters may be relocated to another unit/complex.
- \* Renter might be allowed to break the lease early with no penalties so he or she can move.
- \* Eviction may happen.
- \* If discussions fail or do not occur, renter can initiate legal action.
  - \* Be aware: legal action is not uniformly successful, legal actions can be lengthy, legal actions can be costly.



# Thank You

Melissa Peters

Health Education Specialist

Tobacco Control Program of San Luis  
Obispo County

(805) 781-1561 [mpeters@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:mpeters@co.slo.ca.us)