

Santa Clara County Public Health Department

SMOKE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING BRINGING HEALTHY AIR HOME

Secondhand Smoke Poses Serious Health Threats to Children & Adults

Frequent and recurring exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) can cause health problems such as asthma, heart disease, cancer and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, as well as worsen a chronic illness. Children, the elderly, and the disabled are especially vulnerable to exposure of SHS, yet they are the least able to avoid it.



Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer. ¹



The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Breathing even a little SHS can be harmful. ²



Exposure to SHS is responsible for premature deaths of 41,000 non-smokers every year in the U.S. ¹

Secondhand Smoke Exposure in Multi-Unit Housing

The home is now the #1 source of SHS exposure.

- Smoke travels through doorways, cracks in walls, electrical outlets, ventilation systems, and plumbing.
- Opening windows and using fans does not remove SHS.
- Heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems cannot eliminate exposure to SHS.



33% of Santa Clara County households live in multi-unit housing (MUH) ³ **=** **27%** of total Santa Clara County population (~466,000 people) ³

29% of Santa Clara County residents report smelling tobacco smoke drifting into their home from nearby apartments or from outside ⁴

The rate of SHS exposure was even higher among Latino adults living in multi-unit housing (39%), those with less than a high school diploma (38%), and adults with household incomes less than \$15,000 (36%) ⁴

The Solution: Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing Policy

The most effective way to address SHS exposure is to implement citywide policies that restrict smoking within all MUH, including common areas, balconies, and patios. There are now at least 51 jurisdictions in California that have adopted policies prohibiting smoking in MUH, including Unincorporated Santa Clara County, and the Cities of Sunnyvale, Saratoga, Palo Alto and Los Gatos.

Increased Attention & Demand for Smoke-Free Housing

90% of Santa Clara County residents do not smoke and 65% of adults do not allow smoking in or around their home.

96% of Santa Clara County apartment residents believe that smokers should not be allowed to smoke wherever they want ⁵

84% of Santa Clara County apartment residents surveyed said that they would support a No Smoking Policy at their multi-unit housing complex ⁵

The California Apartment Association (CAA) believes that restricting smoking in a lease is no different than restrictions on noise, quiet hours, pool use, pets and guests - these are all house rules that protect residents and the owner's property. ⁶

Win-Win Proposition for Residents, Owners & Property Managers

- Protect residents and employees from SHS exposure
- Encourage healthy behaviors in residents and employees
- Respond to market demand for smoke-free multi-unit housing
- Reduce turnover costs for new residents
- Lower fire risks and related insurance costs
- Reduce legal actions related to SHS exposure

Get involved and make an impact in your community!

- Join our Tobacco-Free Coalition of Santa Clara County.
- Join our Smoke-free MUH workgroup.
- Invite us to present to your organization or housing association.
- Invite us to participate in neighborhood outreach events.
- Request signage or materials for your organization or housing site.
- Obtain model policy for smoke-free MUH for your city.

For more information, please call 408-793-2700.



Sources:

1. The Health Consequences of Smoking - 50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General (2014)
2. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke (2006)
3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
4. Santa Clara County Public Health Department, 2013-2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey
5. Santa Clara County Public Health Department, 2011-2012 Public Opinion Poll
6. Policy Statements of the California Apartment Association