

## **Things to Look for if You Are Thinking of Moving to an Apartment or Condo**

Of course you will be concerned about the monthly rent and the security deposit. You will want enough closet space. Perhaps you have a cat or dog which you hope will be allowed. **But another concern should be, will you and your household be exposed to tobacco smoke?** As you think about visiting the places for rent consider the following:

Before you even begin, call city hall in the city you are considering and ask the City Clerk's office whether the city has a law which regulates smoking in apartments and condominiums. If yes, get a copy of the law and make yourself familiar with it.

If the city does not have a law, be hopeful. There are landlords and property management companies that are beginning to regulate smoking on their properties. See if you can find the landlords and property management companies that are offering properties that are non-smoking.

Check with friends who live in apartments and condominiums to see if they know of any buildings which are smokefree.

*If smokefree properties are very difficult to find, consider the following:*

Does the unit you are looking at have a patio or balcony? Are there other patios or balconies nearby where people could smoke? If residents are allowed to smoke on their patios or balconies, it is very likely that the smoke will enter your unit.

Are there other buildings close by where people could be smoking on balconies and patios? The management of the unit you are looking at will not have any control over smoking in nearby buildings. Research the city in which the building is located to determine if a law has been passed which regulates smoking in apartments and condominiums.

### **Here are some things to ask about:**

Does the building have any rules about smoking? Are hallways, laundry rooms, lobbies, and mail pick-up areas required to be non-smoking? Are there no smoking signs in any of these areas?

Are any units or sections of the building set aside to be non-smoking?

Is there a smell in the unit you are looking at? It may not be a paint smell. Ask if the last tenant who lived in the unit smoked in the unit or in a nearby outside area. (The smell is probably not from paint, and the person showing you the unit may not be honest with you. Their job is to rent the unit.)

Do the windows of the unit you are looking at have a view of a courtyard or a swimming pool? Are residents and guests allowed to smoke there? If yes, it is possible the smoke will come into your unit.

Does a person who smokes live under, above, or near the unit you are thinking about renting? Again, the person showing you the unit may not be honest with you.

Is there a designated area outside where people can smoke and not bother other residents?

Will you be asked to sign a lease or contract which includes language which requires no smoking on the property? If yes, is the no smoking policy enforced?

**It is difficult to ask these questions, but it is cheaper than having to move again because you and your household are being exposed to neighbors who are constantly smoking. If management assures you that no one is smoking in the entire building, encourage them to continue to save money and also maintain the health of everyone in the building by formally adopting a no smoking policy for the entire building. This can easily be done if management will provide all current tenants and new residents with no smoking lease addendums.**

**See the section of the website which offers landlords the opportunity to join the Smokefree Apartment House Registry for a copy of a no smoking lease addendum.**