

FACTS for People Who Smoke and Who Live in Apartments and Condominiums

FACT: SECONDHAND SMOKE DRIFTS

Secondhand smoke drifts in apartments and condominiums through light fixtures, electrical outlets, plumbing fixtures, microscopic cracks in walls and floors, ceiling crawl spaces, and shared ventilation systems. It also enters units from balconies, patios and outdoor common areas through doorways and windows, some times even when they are closed. Our buildings are not built to be air tight.

FACT: SECONDHAND SMOKE IS DANGEROUS

Secondhand smoke causes all kinds of cancer (lung, breast, nasal sinus, etc.) and heart disease. It is especially harmful to children.

Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from pneumonia, bronchitis, and ear infections. Children with asthma who breathe secondhand smoke will have more asthma attacks and the episodes can be more severe. Secondhand smoke can cause asthma in children and adults.

Persons with chronic illnesses and the elderly are more vulnerable and especially need to be protected from secondhand smoke.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that secondhand smoke is a Group A carcinogen in the same category as benzene, formaldehyde, and arsenic.

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

According to the California Air Resources Board, secondhand smoke is a Toxic Air Contaminant OUTSIDE. It is as dangerous as the most toxic automotive and industrial air pollutants, and can cause illness and death.

Only five minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke causes the main artery carrying blood from the aorta to stiffen as much as if the person had smoked a cigarette. This causes the heart to work harder to pump blood.

According to the most recent report from the U.S. Surgeon General, cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and compounds. Hundreds are toxic and more than 70 cause cancer.

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Also according to the U.S. Surgeon General, the chemicals in tobacco smoke reach the lungs quickly. The blood then carries the chemicals to every organ in the body. Exposure to tobacco smoke quickly damages blood vessels throughout the body and makes the blood more likely to clot. This damage can cause heart attacks, strokes, and even sudden death. Inhaling any burning product will be harmful to your lungs.

A research study published January 2011 and reported by the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that 84% of children who live in apartments with parents who don't smoke showed evidence of exposure to tobacco smoke. The research proves that residents who live in multi-unit housing where smoking is permitted are probably breathing a neighbor's tobacco smoke.

There is no constitutional right to smoke. It is a choice like having a pet.

Please do not smoke in your unit, on your balcony or patio, in the courtyard or within 35 feet of the building. If you need to smoke, please take your smoking materials outside and go for a walk. Or check your local pharmacy for products containing nicotine such as patches and sprays. These are approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), are not as harmful as products produced by the Tobacco Industry, and can be used inside your apartment or condominium or on the balcony or patio.

For free assistance in quitting smoking, call 1-800-no butts.

For more information about the sources of information contained in this document, contact
The Smokefree Apartment House Registry 818-363-4220