



Tenants' Factsheet

Know the Facts

- Smoke drifting from lit tobacco products and/or exhaled by smokers seeps into the living spaces of other tenants and common areas of the building. Secondhand smoke travels through lighting fixtures, cracks in walls, around plumbing, under doors and shared heating/ventilation.
- More than a nuisance or bad smell: Secondhand smoke is a class 'A' carcinogen, like radon and asbestos. Its toxicity warranted a 2006 report from the U.S. Surgeon General, which included a section on secondhand smoke exposure in the home.
- Among the many illnesses caused or made worse by secondhand smoke are: lung cancer, asthma, sinus infections, ear infections, chronic cough, sudden infant death syndrome and heart disease.
- Each year in California, secondhand smoke kills 4,700 people who do not smoke.
- Smoking is not a right guaranteed under the Constitution. You have a right to ask landlords/management companies to protect you from unwanted secondhand smoke and to expect reasonable action.
- It is legal for landlords/management companies of private and public housing to adopt smoke-free building policies which protect your health and their property.

Document the Problem

- Write down how often secondhand smoke enters your home, when it's noticeable, where it seems to come from and how it affects your family.
- Obtain a letter from a physician stating how the secondhand smoke is impacting you/your family's health.
- Find other neighbors also affected by the smoke who will join you to address the problem.

Talk it Out

- Consider friendly ways to talk to the smoker. Offer solutions. Smokers are not always aware of their impact on neighbors.
- Phone, write or meet with your landlord/building management.
- If necessary, make an appointment. Provide documentation on health and secondhand smoke.
- List how the smoke is affecting you and ask the landlord for solutions. Offer solutions: like asking the smoker to smoke outside or reduce smoking.
- Follow-up with a letter documenting conversations with the landlord. Thank him/her/them for their time and ask for notification when something is done.

Advocate for Smoke-Free Housing

- Gather support from neighbors to urge your landlord/ management to write a smoke-free policy into the lease.

COMMUNITIES
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ABUSE

For more information, contact:
554 Broadway, El Cajon, CA 92021
619.442.2727 x112 Julie.Eramo@eccasa.org