**Compliance Strategies: Resident Friendly Enforcement**

Smoke-free policies are largely self-enforcing. Most tenants expect and desire to live in a smoke-free environment. It is important for smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing to be implemented and enforced in a **non-punitive** manner that does not stigmatize residents who smoke or refuse housing to applicants who smoke.

Smoke-free policies are designed to force someone to quit smoking. They are designed to protect your property from fire hazards and to support a healthier environment for residents and staff. In is helpful to explain to residents that your smoke free policy is designed benefit all tenants by protecting everyone from the dangers of secondhand and thirdhand smoke.

Compliance strategies to consider can include, but are not limited to:

**Add smoke-free policy to the lease agreement** and read through the policy with tenants as they sign their lease to ensure that residents are clearly informed of the rules.

**Include a provision in your lease** stating that waivers can only be made in writing. This will further support you in the event one of your residents argues that the smoke‐free policy has been waived due to a lack of prior enforcement.

**Train and educate all staff** about the policy so they can answer questions for residents correctly and to look for signs of smoking.

**Post and update signage**(as a reminder): Once the policy goes into effect, permanent outdoor signs should be posted at all automobile and pedestrian entrances to notify everyone of the policy. These signs should be easy to read and in highly visible locations. Post decals on building doors stating that the building/grounds are smoke-free.

**Maps:** Consider providing a map of the property that clearly shows the property lines and exactly where smoking is allowed or not allowed. This is especially important if the policy does not apply to the entire property.

**Announcements:** depending on the size of the building or organization you might want to consider meetings, inter-office/building mail, email announcements, articles in newsletter, flyers in common areas. It is important for key announcements to come from the top management or board to show that the smoke-free initiative is a priority.

**Feedback and E-mail Boxes**: Provide a way for people to ask questions, make comments and complaints, report violations, and request additional information. Providing a non-electronic feedback box for residents who are reluctant to publicly speak out or to be known can be an effective tool for those who choose to remain anonymous. The feedback box can also be a useful tool for elderly residents that may not use e-mail. Designate a staff member to monitor and respond to emails on a regular basis. Develop several standard responses that can be used for common concerns.

**Frequently Asked Questions:** Develop a 1-2 page document with anticipated or real questions. Post The FAQ in common areas and retain them for internal use to save time and ensure that questions are answered in a standard manner.

**Respond promptly to complaints of secondhand smoke incursion** as you would if one of your residents had requested maintenance. The smoke‐free addendum reinforces this obligation. If you fail to address concerns, other residents might start violating the smoke‐free policies as well.

**Uniformly and promptly enforce your policies.** Some courts have held that an unwillingness to enforce a policy (such as a pet policy) may constitute a waiver of that policy and bar subsequent enforcement. Try to use the same warnings and penalties for the no-smoking policy as you do for other rules.

**Address the concerns of your residents** in a timely manner. Resolution of problems in a timely manner will stop others from arising. If you take the obligation to enforce your policies seriously, residents are less likely to test the policies.

**Try to resolve all disputes amicably**. If the policy is violated, issue verbal and written warnings before proceeding with eviction procedures, if necessary. Have the resident initial verbal warnings and sign written warnings and return them to you in order to create a written record of your attempts to resolve the issue.

**Offer incentives for residents who comply with your policies.** If possible, use the same incentives for the smoking-free policy as you do for other events. Try to partner with local business, associations, medical care providers, organizations, etc... to offer incentives to residents for being compliant, especially for those who have made the decision to quit smoking.

**Special Events:** Schedule one or more special events on or shortly before the date the policy goes into effect to celebrate the implementation. If the building has a common room or area have a small social gathering to acknowledge the implementation of the policy to symbolically make the transition to a healthier place to live and work.

**Timing:** Consider coordinating your activities to take advantage of opportunities such as:

* DC Call It Quits Week
* The Great American Smoke Out in November
* World No Tobacco Day in May
* New Year’s Eve to correspond with individuals making resolutions
* Local events in the District of Columbia (i. e. Camp Breathe Easy)