



SMOKE-FREE HOUSING NEWS

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DID YOU KNOW GOING SMOKE-FREE SAVES MONEY?

There is data to prove smoke-free housing policies save property owners and managers money. Unit turnover costs can be as much as 5 to 10 times higher for units where smoking

is allowed compared to a unit where smoking is prohibited. This translates to an average of \$5000 more per unit in rehabilitation costs for units where smoking is allowed.



Additionally, smoke-free policies reduce fire hazards. According to the U.S. Fire Administration National Fire Data Center, smoking is among the top ten leading causes of residential fire death in the country. In 2014, 7,600 residential fires in the United States were caused by smoking, resulting in \$230 million in losses. In Maine in 2015, 197 fires were caused by smoking materials or cigarettes and six fire deaths directly related to smoking.

MYTH VS. REALITY: THE SMOKE-FREE HOUSING VERSION

There is a lot of information out there about smoke-free policies and smokers' rights that sometimes difficult to separate myth from reality.

Here are a few of the most common things we hear.



Myth 1- If I adopt a smoke-free policy, I will lose money.

Reality- You can save money with a smoke-free policy. You will reduce unit turnover costs. You can also save money by reducing the risk of fire. Some insurance carriers also offer a premium reduction if your property is smoke-free.

Myth 2- A smoke-free policy will cause me to lose valuable residents.

Reality- In Maine, 90% of adults believe people should be protected from secondhand smoke and 8 out of 10 renters would prefer to live in smoke-free apartments. In a 2014 survey of Maine renters 50% of those surveyed said "all things being equal I would be willing to pay a little more to live in a smoke-free apartment." Surveys from other parts of the country show similar preferences for smoke-free apartments.

Myth 3- Enforcing a smoke-free policy is too difficult.

Reality- A strong policy with clear rules and communication is key. Enforcing a smoking policy is easier than dealing with disputes between smokers and nonsmokers without a policy in place. You need to be prepared to follow through with policy violations. We have many [resources for landlords](#) to help including; sample policy language, policy tips, enforcement tips, factsheets and free signage.

MAINE LAWS RELATED TO SMOKE-FREE HOUSING

"Nothing prevents a property owner or manager from adopting rules that limit or even prohibit smoking. It is legal for landlords and property managers to adopt smoke-free housing policies to protect residents from secondhand smoke, to reduce property damage and reduce fire danger."

- Janet T. Mills, Maine Attorney General

In Maine there are strong laws to protect people from the harmful affects of secondhand smoke in public places. In addition to these laws, there are laws that have specific implications for multi-unit housing landlords, property owners and managers.

- [Smoking Disclosure Law](#)- requires landlords/property owners and managers to notify all existing tenants and all potential tenants, in writing, where smoking is allowed, if anywhere, on the property in a written lease agreement or separate written notice.
- [Maine Human Rights Act](#)- prohibits discrimination in housing on account of physical disability.

- [Maine Medical Use of Marijuana Act](#)- a landlord or business owner may prohibit the smoking of marijuana for medical purposes on the premises, if the landlords or business owner prohibits all smoking on the premises and posts notice to that effect on the premises.
- [Federal Fair Housing Act](#)- Prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18), or disability.

[For more information and resources visit our website.](#)

SIGNAGE- YOUR KEY TO POLICY COMMUNICATION

Remember you are not telling tenants they have to quit smoking. The purpose of the smoke-free policy is to protect your property from damage and fire danger. Posting signs and window decals in key locations will help remind tenants and their guests, of the smoke-free policy.



Breathe easy, you're in **Maine.**  

You can [order free materials on our website.](#)

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Staff with the Smoke-Free Housing initiative at Breathe Easy are here to help with smoke-free housing policy adoption, implementation and to answer your questions. We also have local partners in every county in Maine available to help you with smoke-free housing policies.

Our website has lots of resources specifically for Maine landlords, property owners and managers including-

- Factsheets
- Lease and policy templates
- Tips for policy adoption & enforcement
- Information about Maine laws related to smoke-free housing
- Informational videos

Check out the [Landlord resources](#) section of our website for these resources and more. Or [contact us](#) with questions or for assistance.

Breathe Easy | [BreatheEasyMaine.org](https://www.BreatheEasyMaine.org)

STAY CONNECTED:

