

Live Smoke Free
Smoke-Free Multi-Housing Program
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NEW SURVEY SHOWS METRO RENTERS CONSIDER MOVING BECAUSE OF SECONDHAND SMOKE

Nearly half of renters would consider moving to live in a smoke-free apartment building

SAINT PAUL, MINN. --- A new survey released today in conjunction with the Great American Smokeout shows that many renters are experiencing a health hazard that is seeping into their home. Nearly 30 percent of Twin Cities apartment renters have experienced secondhand smoke in their unit from somewhere else in the building at least a few times a month. Nearly half of all renters surveyed would consider moving to live in a smoke-free apartment building.

Live Smoke Free, a program of the Association for Nonsmokers—Minnesota that assists apartment owners and renters who struggle with secondhand smoke problems, contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a mailed and telephone survey from November 2008-February 2009. A total of 406 completed surveys were collected from renters in the seven-county metro area. The survey, funded by a Tobacco-Free Communities grant from the Minnesota Department of Health, assessed the levels of secondhand smoke exposure in apartment units and the desire to live in a smoke-free environment.

“The survey found that one in five renters who are exposed to secondhand smoke in their units believe that they, or someone in their household, have experienced health problems because of the smoke,” said Brittany McFadden, Live Smoke Free’s Program Director. “These health risks could have been decreased with a smoke-free apartment policy. A recent Institute of Medicine study showed that smoke-free policies are effective ways of reducing the risk of heart disease associated with exposure to secondhand smoke.”

Apartment Owners are Working to Meet the Demand

With growing numbers of renters interested in living in a smoke-free environment, more apartment owners and managers are making their buildings smoke free. According to Live Smoke Free, over 350 apartment buildings in Minnesota have adopted smoke-free policies.

One of those buildings is Parkwood Pointe in Burnsville. Formerly the Burncliff Apartments, Parkwood Pointe suffered a severe electrical fire last year. Parkwood Pointe is reconstructing the building that was destroyed by the fire and will reopen the building smoke free this spring. The new policy will eliminate secondhand smoke seepage through the building and will lower cleaning costs for the management company.

“We are very excited to offer a smoke-free environment to our residents,” said Christine Cobb, Regional Director of Marketing for the Goodman Group, the company that manages Parkwood Pointe. “Our mission is to create and manage living environments that emphasize quality of life and enable residents and staff to achieve an optimum level of well-being. A smoke-free policy is good for the health of our residents and for the bottom line of our company.”

Renters who want to avoid secondhand smoke appreciate the policies.

“I’ve lived in several apartment buildings that allowed smoking and I was always unhappy,” said Lynnette Gyllenblad, a renter from Excelsior, MN. “My current apartment manager has made my building smoke free and the difference is night and day. Now I don’t have to worry that someone else’s smoke is harming my health.”

To learn more about Live Smoke Free, the new research data, and to view a directory of smoke-free apartments in Minnesota visit www.mnsmokefreehousing.org.

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About Live Smoke Free

Live Smoke Free is a program of the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota and was launched in 2007 with a Tobacco-Free Communities grant from the Minnesota Department of Health. Live Smoke Free promotes smoke-free policies for apartment buildings in the Twin Cities metro area. Live Smoke Free assists building owners and managers with creating and promoting a smoke-free policy for their property. The program also assists renters in finding solutions to secondhand smoke problems.

About the Goodman Group

The Goodman Group, a privately held company, has seen substantial growth since its early beginnings in 1965. Today, the senior living, health care, and residential communities provide homes and services for tens of thousands of residents and employment for over four thousand individuals.

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