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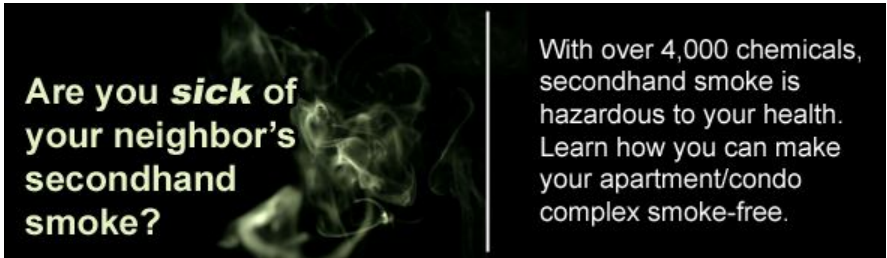
Sarasota County's Tobacco Prevention Program encouraging smoke-free housing

Smoke-free policies can protect residents from secondhand smoke and related health problems

SARASOTA COUNTY — Smoke-free multi-unit housing is a growing trend throughout the country and is making its way to Florida. There are more than 500 smoke-free multi-unit housing properties and 73,000 smoke-free units across the state.

“There’s a fear of alienating resident smokers, but most communities that have taken the leap consider smoke-free housing an edge over the competition and have determined that there is a market for this product,” says former Government Affairs Director for the Florida Apartment Association Chip Tatum.

For property managers and landlords, smoke-free policies can have economic benefits. More than 80 percent of Floridians are non-smokers. Many people who do smoke do not permit smoking in their homes. Given these numbers, many properties have very successfully marketed their smoke-free policy as an amenity, not a restriction. Smoke-free policies can save money by eliminating the need to repair or replace carpeting, floors, fixtures, countertops or appliances damaged by burns or nicotine stains. At the end of a lease, smoke-free units require less turnover time due to fewer preparation and repainting needs.



Are you *sick* of your neighbor's secondhand smoke?

With over 4,000 chemicals, secondhand smoke is hazardous to your health. Learn how you can make your apartment/condo complex smoke-free.

In one Florida survey of 421 managers of smoke-free properties, 99.5 percent of the managers agreed that smoke-free policies do not hurt occupancy and nearly a third believed that they increased occupancy.

“A home should be a safe place for everyone, especially for children, people with existing health conditions, and the elderly who are more vulnerable to the effects of secondhand smoke,” said Tobacco Program Manager Jeanette Robinson of the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County. By making sure that residential buildings are 100 percent smoke-free, property managers are protecting tenants from the dangers of toxic smoke and from the risk of deadly smoking-related fires.

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Secondhand smoke is not the only danger associated with tobacco use at home. According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), smoking-related fires are the leading cause of fire deaths in residential buildings. These fires are eight times more likely to result in death than fires that start from another source. Smoking-related fires in residential buildings result in an average of approximately 365 deaths, 925 injuries, and \$326 million in property loss each year,

For more information about Sarasota County's Tobacco Prevention Program and its multi-unit housing initiative, please visit <http://www.sarasotahealth.org/tobacco/smokefreehousing.htm> or call 941-861-2805.

Tobacco Free Florida is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco Free Florida is managed by the Florida Department of Health, specifically the Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida.

Smokers and smokeless tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach. To learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit smoking resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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