

A guide for Property Owners, Managers & Housing Providers

CREATING A SMOKE-FREE & VAPE-FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING COMMUNITY



 **Breathe**[®]
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Improving lung health since 1916

WHY GO SMOKE-FREE & VAPE-FREE?

A smoke-free and vape-free property benefits everyone. It creates a healthier living environment, protects residents from secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol, reduces maintenance costs, and increases the appeal of your property.

Benefits include:

- Healthier indoor air for all residents
- Reduced exposure to secondhand smoke and vape aerosol
- Lower fire risk
- Reduced cleaning, painting, and turnover costs
- Fewer complaints about smoke drifting between units

WHY THIS GUIDE?

Residents increasingly expect clean, healthy places to live. A smoke-free and vape-free property protects residents from secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol while reducing maintenance costs and improving the overall quality of your community.

Whether you own one duplex or manage hundreds of apartments, this guide will help you successfully develop, communicate, and implement a smoke-free and vape-free policy.

- Increased marketability to prospective residents
- Cleaner, more attractive common areas
- Support for a healthier community



THEM

PLANNING YOUR POLICY

Every property is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all policy. Whether you are developing a new community, purchasing an existing property, or updating your current policies, planning ahead will help ensure a successful transition.

New Construction

The easiest time to implement a smoke-free and vape-free policy is before residents move in. Include the policy in leases, marketing materials, and resident handbooks from the beginning.

Existing Properties

Many owners choose to transition existing properties over time. Others implement the policy for all new and renewing leases while providing advance notice to current residents.

Many communities find that adopting a property-wide policy is simpler than allowing smoking or vaping in designated areas because it is easier to communicate and enforce.

This approach is consistent with the original guide's recommendation that whole-building policies are generally easier to administer than allowing smoking in selected units.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Secondhand smoke and vape aerosol can travel through ventilation systems, hallways, windows, electrical outlets, plumbing openings, and shared walls, even when residents smoke or vape inside their own unit.



COMMUNITY

SEVEN STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. Assess Your Property

Review where smoking or vaping currently occurs and gather input from residents if appropriate. This information can help identify concerns and improve communication during implementation.

2. Develop Your Policy

Determine:

- Where smoking and vaping will be prohibited
- Whether outdoor tobacco use areas will be permitted
- When the policy will take effect
- How violations will be addressed

Many communities now choose to prohibit smoking and vaping throughout the entire property, including:

- Individual units
- Balconies and patios
- Common areas
- Hallways
- Parking lots
- Playgrounds
- Entrances
- Outdoor gathering spaces

3. Communicate Early

Provide residents with advance notice.

Explain:

- Why the policy is being adopted
- The implementation timeline
- Areas covered by the policy
- Available tobacco and nicotine treatment resources

Residents are more likely to support the policy when they understand it protects everyone's health and safety. enforcement

4. Update Policies and Leases

Incorporate the smoke-free and vape-free policy into:

- Lease agreements
- Resident handbooks
- Community rules
- Employee policies (if applicable)

Clearly state that residents are responsible for ensuring household members and guests comply with the policy.

5. Prepare the Property

Before implementation:

- Install smoke-free and vape-free signs
- Notify contractors and vendors
- Update websites and marketing materials
- Train staff on policy enforcement

6. Implement and Enforce Consistently

Like any community rule, the policy should be enforced consistently. Most communities find education and reminders resolve the majority of issues. If violations occur, follow the same progressive enforcement process used for other lease violations.

7. Promote Your Community

A smoke-free and vape-free community is an attractive feature for many renters.

Promote your policy in:

- Rental listings
- Social media
- Property websites
- Leasing materials

SHOULD WE HAVE A DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA?

Some communities choose to provide an outdoor tobacco use area.

Others prohibit smoking and vaping throughout the entire property because it is easier to enforce and better protects residents from secondhand smoke and aerosol.

If an outdoor area is provided, consider locating it well away from:

- Entrances
- Windows
- Air intakes
- Patios
- Playgrounds
- Outdoor gathering areas

New Hampshire Law

- New Hampshire's Indoor Smoking Act prohibits smoking in most enclosed workplaces and many public places.
- Property owners may adopt policies that go beyond state law by prohibiting smoking and vaping throughout their property, including residential units, common areas, and outdoor spaces, as permitted by law.



SMOKE-FREE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I prohibit smoking and vaping in my apartments?

Yes. Property owners may establish reasonable lease provisions that prohibit smoking and vaping while continuing to rent to individuals who use tobacco or nicotine products. The policy addresses the behavior—not the person. This distinction is emphasized throughout the original guide.

Will I lose tenants?

Experience from smoke-free housing communities suggests that many residents prefer smoke-free environments. Smoke-free communities are increasingly viewed as a desirable amenity, and the original guide also notes the consumer demand for smoke-free units.

Will enforcement be difficult?

Most property managers report that enforcement becomes part of routine property management. Clear expectations, consistent communication, signage, and lease language help reduce problems. The original guide similarly recommends treating violations like other lease violations and notes that many smoke-free policies are largely self-enforcing.

Can I include vaping?

Yes. Many modern housing policies prohibit both smoking and vaping to protect residents from secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol while maintaining consistent expectations throughout the property.

How far in advance should I start planning the policy rollout?

Aim for a timeline of 6 to 12 months. A generous window allows landlords to “set a time frame for change” that accounts for staggered annual lease renewals, gives residents ample notice, and lets staff prepare materials without rushing.

Where should I display signs to make the policy clear to guests and vendors?

Map out high-traffic transition zones. Install highly visible signs at all main property entryways, lobby doors, elevators, parking lots, and shared outdoor spaces like patios or playgrounds. Informing guests and visiting vendors of the rules helps prevent accidental violations and supports tenant compliance.

How can I support residents who smoke during this transition?

Provide clear, accessible cessation resources alongside the policy announcement. Team up with Breathe New Hampshire to supply brochures, details about free state quit lines, and cessation program timelines. Transitioning to a smoke-free building can act as an excellent motivator for residents who already want to quit.

THANK YOU!

Breathe New Hampshire is committed to helping create healthier communities across our state by providing education, resources, and support to promote cleaner, safer indoor air. We are here to help property owners and landlords navigate the process of going smoke-free and provide tools to make implementation as smooth as possible. Thank you for considering a smoke-free vape-free policy for your property and taking an important step toward protecting the health, comfort, and well-being of your residents, employees, and visitors.