



Renovation costs, purchasing preferences and fire damage and fatalities

Renovation costs

Turnover costs, including cleaning, painting, flooring and appliances, are five times greater in the units of heavy smokers than in non-smoking units.¹ The expense of cleaning and renovating units vacated by smokers is due to the potent odour and persistent nature of third-hand smoke.

Third-hand smoke was measurably present in units vacated by smokers even after having been cleaned, renovated and left vacant for two months.² Smokers' homes were vacant for almost twice as long as non-smokers homes and were more likely to be repainted and get new flooring.

Over 27 per cent of California multi-unit property owners and managers in one survey incurred smoking-related costs in the previous 12 months.³ Buildings with a complete smoking ban incurred smoking related costs of US\$1,866, buildings that allowed smoking incurred US\$3,425 and buildings with partial bans incurred US\$9,573, suggesting savings would only be made with complete smoking bans.

Purchasing and renting preferences

When it came to preferences for buying into a new unit, 63 per cent of Minnesota owner-occupied residents in common-interest communities would definitely, and another 17 per cent would probably, choose a no-smoking building if buying another unit. Forty six per cent of owners surveyed said they would pay more for a unit in a non-smoking building.⁴

Similarly, in another US survey, 54 per cent of renters were very like to choose a smoke-free building and 34 per cent would be willing to pay more to live in a smoke-free building.⁵ This reflects the prevalence of exposure to smoke-drift and the level of annoyance it creates.

After banning smoking indoors and in the outdoor communal areas of an Oregon apartment, 85 per cent of former smokers and 92 per cent of never smokers were happy with the policy. By contrast, only 30 per cent of smokers were happy with the policy.⁶



Fire damage and fatalities caused by cigarettes and smoking materials

In Australia, smoking is the leading cause of residential and total fire deaths.⁷ Between 2000 and 2006 there were 15 deaths caused by cigarettes in the multi-unit housing in Australia.⁸

The disturbing loss of life and property from cigarette fires prompted the introduction of reduced fire risk cigarettes standards in Australia, which became mandatory in 2010.⁹ However, reduced fire risk cigarettes can still cause fires and the standard does not apply to loose tobacco or cigars.

Even though all states in the US adopted fire-safe cigarette legislation between 2004 and 2011, and this was associated with a 19 per cent reduction in residential fire mortality, 23 per cent of domestic fires deaths are still caused by smoking materials.¹⁰

How to quit

Call Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848) for free information, practical assistance and support.

Discuss quitting smoking with a health professional and plan your quitting strategy together.

Consider using pharmacotherapy such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), Bupropion Hcl or Varenicline.



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Endnotes: ¹ Sanford Maine Housing Authority Case Study is available at: <http://www.smokefreeforme.org/property-owners-managers?page=Save+Money%252C%253Cbr%253E+Save+Your+Building>. ² Matt GE, Quintana PJE, Zakarian JM, Fortmann AL, Chatfield DA Hoh E, Uribe AM Hovell MF. When smokers move out and no-smokers move in: residential thirdhand smoke pollution and exposure. *Tobacco Control* 2001; 20(1):1-8. ³ Ong MK, Diamant AL, Zhou Q, Park HY, Kaplan R. Estimates of Smoking-Related Property Costs in California Multiunit Housing. *Am J of Pub Health* 2012; 102(3):490-492. ⁴ Hewett MJ, Orland WH, Brock BE, Heim CJ. Secondhand Smoke and Smokefree Policies in Owner-Occupied Multi-Unit Housing. *Am J Prev Med*, 2012; 43(5S3):187-196. ⁵ Hewett MJ, Sandell SD, Anderson J, Niebuhr M. Secondhand smoke in apartment buildings: renter and owner or manager perspectives. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. 2007; 9(1):S39-S47. ⁶ Drach, LL Pizacani BA, Rohde KL, Schubert S. The Acceptability of Comprehensive Smoke-Free Policies to Low-Income Tenants in Subsidized Housing. *Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy* 2010; 7(3):A67. ⁷ Australian Competition Consumer Commission. *Product Safety Australia. Cigarettes (reduced fire risk)*. Available at: <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/974709>. ⁸ Hoy M and Morton S. NCIS Database Search. Deaths associated with fires caused by cigarettes between 1 June 2000 - 30 June 2006. Report produced for NSW Fire Brigades. Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, National Coroners Information System, 2006. ⁹ Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. *Product Safety. Reduced fire risk cigarettes Suppliers Guide*. 2010. ¹⁰ Yau RK, Marshall SW. Association between fire-safe cigarette legislation and residential fire deaths in the United States. *Injury Epidemiology* 2014; 1(10).