

SMOKE FREE MULTI-UNIT HOUSING NORTH-CAROLINA

COST SAVINGS

Smoke-free Policies Are Good for Business

Adopting a smoke-free policy is cheaper for the bottom line. Many property owners and managers in North Carolina have gone smoke-free to reduce costs.

The sooner you go smoke-free, the sooner you can save money in decreased maintenance, turnover, and fire damage costs. Adopting a smoke-free policy can also boost tenant demand for the property.

Smoke-free Policies Reduce Maintenance and Ongoing Costs

According to several N.C. property owners and managers, the cost of maintaining and rehabilitating smoking units is significantly more than the cost associated with non-smoking units. It can cost an extra \$1,000 to refurbish a smoking unit.

Rose Stevens, a manager for RPM in the Piedmont area, was frustrated by how much money she was losing with her smoking tenants:

“It’s ridiculous how much it cost us to convert smoking units – it cost us three times as much to rehab the smoking units as the non-smoking ones.”

Going smoke-free was an obvious choice for Tonya Dunn, a property manager in the Triangle:

“The turnover costs for smoking units were just adding up. We’d have to hire a vendor that specializes in eliminating odors to rip out the carpet and padding and replace stained cabinets and appliances.

One time we had to gut the whole apartment because the smoke had turned the whole thing yellow. Not only did it cost us a lot, but it put a strain on our maintenance staff. Plus, there’s the issue of cigarette butts lying around the property. Maintenance staff doesn’t have to waste time picking them up, one by one, and in the end, that saves us money.”

Scott Alderman, President of Landura Management Associates in Winston-Salem, can speak to the cost benefits of smoke-free policies. He reports:



Hobart Jackson Estates after rehabbing smoking units. Image credit: Rose Stevens.

“First, there’s not as much turnover or HVAC ductwork with smoke-free policies. Second, they keep the property cleaner.”

Smoke-free Policies Reduce Costs Due to Fire

It only takes one resident to fall asleep smoking to light a whole building on fire. Aside from the tragic human costs of fires, they also result in major financial costs for property owners to repair damage and house residents elsewhere while repairs are being made. A property that experiences a cigarette-related fire may also have to pay higher insurance premiums in the future.

In 2010, two fires caused by smoking cost Scott Alderman’s company \$1.3 million. His solution: adopt a smoke-free policy.



Smoking-related fires destroy a property. Image credit: Scott Alderman.

Most Tenants Want Smoke-Free Housing

Providing a clean and healthy environment for residents can be a big selling point for your property. Surveys have shown that most tenants want smoke-free housing. In many cases, the policy has actually *increased* tenant demand.

Tonya Dunn has first-hand experience with high demand for smoke-free units. She opened a 100% smoke-free property in January 2013. She notes:

“When people come and look for information, people love the fact that we are smoke-free. We have 339 units total, and 36 units were pre-leased without even seeing a unit, which puts us ahead of the game.”

To learn more about how smoke-free policies can save you money:
Visit the NC Division of Public Health’s Smoke-Free Housing Website at
<http://www.smokefreehousingnc.com>



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