

Yakima Housing Authority

No Smoking Policy

The Yakima Housing Authority is considering implementation of a no smoking policy in all of its rental properties for the following reasons:

- To provide a healthy living and working environment for tenants, employees, and guests. It is the Housing Authority's mission to build stronger communities through our commitment to safe and affordable housing, and since it has been demonstrated that smoking of tobacco or other substances creates second- and third-hand smoke (residue) that is pervasive and cannot be limited to any given area in a structure, the only way to provide a safe and affordable housing environment is to prohibit smoking throughout rental properties in both public and private areas.
- To eliminate the risk of fires from smoking materials. Smoking causes thousands of fires each year resulting in thousands of injuries and deaths in addition to millions of dollars in property damage. Once again, the Housing Authority's mission is to provide safe and affordable housing as free as possible from threats to life and safety. The risk of fire from smoking conflicts with the Housing Authority's mission. Property damage from smoking-related fires results in the loss of scarce financial resources that the Housing Authority needs to pursue its mission.
- To reduce maintenance & renovation costs caused by smoking residue in living units and common spaces. Smoking results in burns, residual stains and unpleasant odors which are costly to repair and/or eliminate and which make re-occupancy by non-smokers problematic. The Housing Authority must preserve its properties for the longest possible use by eligible clients with its limited financial resources. This goal is adversely affected by the undue deterioration of properties when smoking is permitted.
- Notice to Tenants. To insure universal, consistent application of no smoking policies and to facilitate the change-over for tenants who smoke, the Yakima Housing Authority will provide current tenants with extended notice of its intent to implement a no smoking policy throughout its rental programs/properties in order. Tenants have already been given an opportunity to participate in a survey about the no smoking policy. In addition, the Housing Authority will schedule and conduct tenant meetings to further explain the policy and reasons for it as well as to give tenants an opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions. This notice shall be no less than **two (2) months** prior to the effective date of the no smoking policy implementation and shall include a **minimum of sixty (60) days** formal notice of the effective date.
- Grandfathering of Existing Smokers. The Yakima Housing Authority's no smoking policy will not permit "grandfathering" (existing smokers being allowed to continue smoking in their premises following implementation of the no smoking policy until a given date or until they terminate their tenancies) because of the inability to prevent the spread of second- and third-hand smoke and the harm that it does to non-smoking tenants and to the properties.
- Enforcement Following the Implementation Date. Enforcement of the no smoking policy shall be conducted in a manner similar to the enforcement of any other occupancy policy to which tenants are required comply (rent payment, maintaining their premises, avoid disturbances of neighbors, etc.). The Housing Authority will, however, take into consideration the addictive nature of smoking and the difficulty that many smokers have in quitting. If, after two written warnings, a tenant continues to violate the no smoking policy, then the Housing Authority's

usual procedures for correcting lease violations shall be used to assure compliance or, in the alternative, to terminate the tenant's lease.

- Signage. The Housing Authority shall place appropriate "No Smoking" signs throughout its rental properties to insure that all tenants are aware of the policy and further that all guests entering the properties are adequately notified of the no smoking policy. Tenants shall be responsible for the behavior of their guests, particularly with respect to compliance with the no smoking policy.

The Yakima Housing Authority understands that smoking is an addictive practice not easily given up by habitual smokers and that having to smoke outside the building (at least 25 feet from the building) may be difficult for some tenants. While this fact is not sufficient to convince the Housing Authority that smoking in its properties should be ignored (for the above stated reasons) and that implementation of a no smoking policy is the correct course of action, the Housing Authority recognizes that more than just a simple legal notice is appropriate for smokers to adjust to the change. The Housing Authority is also committed to an interactive process during the notice period that gives tenants an opportunity to question and understand the policy change and to suggest possible actions that may make the implementation easier for everyone. The Housing Authority will also employ its best efforts to make smoking cessation resources available to tenants who may wish to take advantage of them.

The Yakima Housing Authority no smoking policy:

- Will prohibit smoking in all of its units, in common areas and workspaces, and within 25 feet of buildings effective _____.
- Will insure that new (or rehab) developments for which construction started after _____ (date) _____ are also smoke free (no smoking on the premises during construction or thereafter once occupancy occurs).
- Will seek to identify support for its no smoking/smoke-free policy by entering into collaborative partnerships with local public health and non-profit organizations that can provide resources and assistance to tenants and staff who may choose to quit smoking.