



San Joaquin County Public Health Services 2014 Quarter 2—STOPP Newsletter

Second and Third-hand Smoke

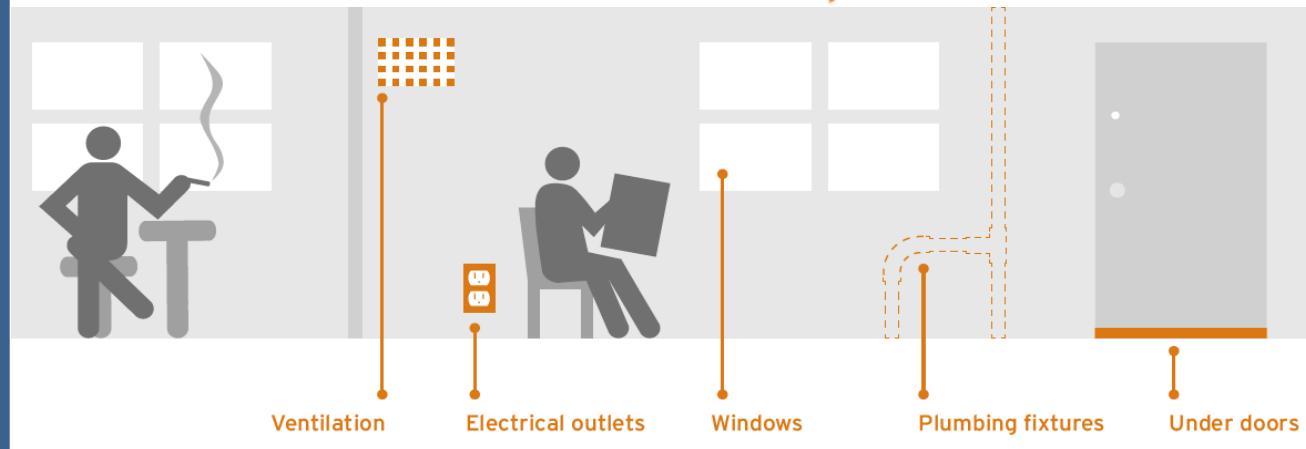
The first *Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health* was released in 1964. Since then, over 20 million people have died from diseases caused by secondhand smoke exposure – such as lung cancer and heart disease – including 2.5 million non-smokers.¹ There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke, and it can cause both immediate and long-term damage to the body. Furthermore, over 7,000 chemicals and chemical compounds have been identified in tobacco smoke, at least 70 of which are known to be cancer causing.¹

While Californians are protected from secondhand smoke in many public places, such as restaurants, bars, museums, and on public transportation, many people are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes. In multi-unit housing complexes, tobacco smoke spreads from individual units into common areas and other units by way of ventilation systems, through gaps in doors and windows, and even plumbing. Air quality studies conducted in multi-unit housing complexes estimate that up to 60% of air can come from adjoining units.² In addition to posing a fire risk, second-hand smoke in multi-unit housing presents a serious health issue, attributing to a variety of illnesses, including cancer, COPD, and heart disease. It can be particularly dangerous to children – increasing their risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ear and respiratory infections, and asthma.¹

More recently, focus has shifted to the dangerous effects of third-hand smoke – particulate matter that comes from secondhand smoke.³ Third-hand smoke often combines with other indoor pollutants and dust, and is absorbed by permeable materials that are used to make things such as curtains, carpets and furniture.³ These miniature particles can settle deeply into furniture, walls, and other surfaces, while slowly releasing hazardous material into the air which can then be inhaled.⁴

Second and third-hand smoke residue make it very difficult to clean an apartment once a tenant moves out, and a smoker's apartment can cost up to \$5000 more to rehabilitate compared to that of a non-smoker.⁵ Secondhand smoke cannot be controlled.

How secondhand smoke spreads





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The Surgeon General has concluded that eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only way to fully protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure and that separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot completely prevent secondhand smoke exposure.⁶ Property owners and managers can adopt and enforce voluntary policies prohibiting smoking on their premises, thus protecting their residents and property from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke, and making their units more desirable.

State law (Chapter 264, Statutes of 2011, Senate Bill 332) allows, but does not require, a landlord to prohibit the smoking of cigarettes or other tobacco products on the property, in any building or portion of the building, including inside the residential unit.⁷ In addition, the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which manages federal funding for affordable housing, strongly encourages smoke-free policies, and has developed a toolkit to assist managers and landlords with the process.⁷ The Housing Authority of San Joaquin County prohibits smoking in 100% of its units, in all indoor and outdoor common areas, and within 20 feet of all buildings.⁸ Establishing smoke-free multi-unit housing has a multitude of benefits that would help protect the health of residents, lower turnover costs, and reduce fire hazard. Communities across the state have taken steps to prohibit smoking in and around multi-unit housing complexes – property managers, owners, and landlords have the opportunity to change their environment while contributing to a healthier community.

If you are a landlord, property manager, or owner and are interested in learning more about your options as well as sample smoke-free policy language, or you are a tenant who would like to learn more about your rights surrounding smoke-free housing, please contact STOPP staff at (209) 468-2415.



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8. The Center for Tobacco Policy and Organizing. Matrix of smokefree housing authority policies. The American Lung Association in California. December, 2013. Available at: <http://center4tobaccopolicy.org/tobacco-policy/smokefree-multi-unit-housing/>