

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SMOKING & HOUSING

Other residents of my building are smoking in their units or on their decks and it's coming into my home. Doesn't the law protect me?

The [Smoking in Public Places](#) law does not prohibit smoking in homes or on attached decks and there are no local or state laws that protect a resident from the smoke of their neighbors. However, apartment management and condo boards can adopt a smoke-free policy for any part of or all of the property and we can help!

What you can do:

- **Examine your lease.** If your lease has a smoke-free section or a clause that prohibits nuisances that harm or limit the peaceful enjoyment in your dwelling, bringing it to the attention to the management may help resolve the problem.
- **Seek support from your other neighbors.** A complaint coming from many people may be taken more seriously than a complaint from one person. Other people in your building may also be experiencing problems with tobacco smoke coming into their units and can join you in advocating for changes.
- **Try the "good neighbor" approach.** Talk to or write a note to the neighbor who is smoking. Explain the situation and ask them to smoke away from your unit. Many times the person smoking doesn't have any idea where their smoke is drifting, so may not be aware of the problem.
- **Ask for help.** Contact management and ask them to talk to the tenant. And if they don't already have a smoke-free policy, ask if they would consider implementing one. We would be happy to help – they can contact us for information.
- **Contact us.** If you don't feel comfortable going directly to management, feel free to get in touch with us. We can contact your landlord directly and offer support. We can keep you anonymous if you'd like.

My building already has a smoke-free policy and my neighbors are violating it. What can be done?

Building management has enforcement authority in this situation. We can contact the management to provide resources on enforcement, but we cannot force them to comply. If you are in this situation, feel free to contact us for help or talk to your landlord directly.

I spoke to my landlord and they won't do anything. What do I do?

You may want to speak to a civil attorney. The [Tenants Union of Washington State](#) has some resources about resolving conflict with neighbors and [resolving smoking disputes](#). See the [Washington Bar Association](#) for information on how to find legal help.

Someone is smoking in a public area of my building (this could include: hallway, staircase, elevator, laundry room and within 25 feet of the main building entrance). Is this against the law?

Likely yes. The [Smoking in Public Places](#) law prohibits smoking in indoor common areas or within 25 feet of any indoor common area. Contact us to report a potential violation. We will investigate your claim and if a violation is found, work with management to rectify the situation.

Someone is smoking on the sidewalk and it's drifting into my apartment/condo windows. Isn't that against the law?

No, this is not a violation of the [Smoking in Public Places](#) law. Current law states that smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of any public entrance; however a private window or doorway does not constitute a public place.

What can I do? The secondhand smoke is driving me crazy!

This is a common problem and we understand that it's frustrating. Oftentimes people smoking in those areas don't know where their smoke is drifting, so they may not be aware that it's causing a problem for you.

What you can do:

- **Seek support from your neighbors.** A complaint coming from many people may be taken more seriously than a complaint from one person. Other people in your building may also be experiencing problems with tobacco smoke coming into their units and can help advocate.
- **Talk to management.** If you're in a multi-unit building, speak with your landlord or owner and ask if they can put up no-smoking signs. [Free printable signs are available](#). If the smoking is happening outside of a local business, then ask your management office to speak with that business about your complaint. Or speak to that business yourself. They may not even know there's a problem, so bringing it to their attention – in a calm manner – may help.
- **Contact us.** We can contact your management office or adjacent business and offer support.