



SmokeFree Housing: A Sweeping Trend in the Local Housing Market
By Jo Becker, Education/Outreach Specialist, Fair Housing Council of Oregon

In '06, Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc. was hired to get the pulse of the local rental market and a sense of the viability of, and demand for, smokefree housing policies. Many of you may know John Campbell as a nationally renowned landlord trainer based here in Portland. His report states that "even if we put aside the significant health benefits of smokefree housing as a reason for landlords to implement such policies, **a landlord who wishes to attract a large number of quality applicants will gain a distinct competitive advantage by offering housing that is smokefree.**"

Specifically, the local survey found that:

- 8 in 10 renters do not allow smoking in their homes
- 8 in 10 agree that exposure to even small amounts of secondhand smoke is a serious health risk, including 2/3 of current smokers
- 3/4 of all metro-area renters agree that, all things being equal, they would choose a rental home where smoking is forbidden
- 42% said they would actively avoid places where other renters smoked; compared to only 11% who look specifically for a lack of such policies

Smoking restrictions make further business sense when you consider savings on certain cleaning and maintenance costs, a reduction in the risk of accidental fires, and possible reduction in insurance costs. What's more, a free Portland / Vancouver area public service site, HousingConnections.org serves as your smokefree registry allowing your to promote smokefree properties and consumers to conduct a "Smoking Restrictions" search by area, school district, etc.

This is all fine and well, but are such policies legal? How do you go about formulating a rule change for a property you own or manage? How do you enforce such rules? What additional resources are available to you as you consider converting properties or units to non-smoking status?

These and many more issues will be discussed at the Rental Housing Assn. of Greater Portland's landlord trade show on May 21st from 12:45 to 1:30. Look for the session entitled ""Smokefree" Homes: A Sweeping Trend in the Housing Industry" in room 140 and join us for a rousing and informative class that you won't want to miss! For more information about this industry trade show, visit www.rhagp.org or contact the association office at 503/254-4723.

This article brought to you by the Fair Housing Council; a nonprofit serving the state of Oregon and SW Washington. Learn more and / or sign up for our free, periodic newsletter at FHCO.org.

Qs about your rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws?

Visit FHCO.org or call 1-800-424-3247 Ext. 2.

Qs about this article? Want to schedule an in-office fair housing training program or speaker for corporate or association functions?

Contact Jo Becker at jbecker@FHCO.org or 503/453-4016.

Have property to promote?

Advertise vacancies or for-sales free across the Portland / Vancouver market at HousingConnections.org!