

## PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY SMOKE-FREE POLICY

JULY 2014

### **Purpose:**

Smoking cigarettes and inhalation of second-hand smoke substantially increases the risks of cancer, auto-immune disease, osteoporosis, emphysema, stillbirth, type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart attack and death, as detailed on the attached Fact Sheet. Smoke is a fire hazard, including fire-related deaths, and increases the cost of unit maintenance. It is undisputed that nicotine is addictive and that it is difficult for people to quit smoking. The purpose of this policy is to gradually eliminate smoking from PHA premises, thereby mitigating the serious health hazards caused by smoking and second-hand smoke, while providing intensive cessation assistance (to stop smoking) to all residents who smoke cigarettes.

### **Directive:**

1. The Philadelphia Housing Authority (“PHA”) has determined that for the benefit and well-being of the residents, staff and guests, smoking shall not be permitted in or on PHA Premises (as defined below, in “Definitions”).
2. As of December 1, 2014, when a tenant is due for recertification, a lease addendum shall be required, incorporating the procedures for enforcement of the smoke-free policy.
3. Procedures for implementation shall be created by PHA staff with input from resident leadership and the Board’s Policy and Planning Committee. Enforcement measures may include: a verbal warning, written notice of violation, an informal conference, and, after repeated violations, a notice of lease termination and eviction. PHA’s grievance (for public housing) or informal hearing (for HCV) procedures are applicable to violations of the policy and its implementation procedures.
4. PHA shall communicate the policy and procedures to staff and residents no later than October 1, 2014. Residents shall be responsible for their guests and a violation of this policy by a guest may be considered a violation by the leaseholder.
5. PHA shall provide cessation assistance to all interested residents, no later than December 1, 2014, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Department of Health.

### **Definitions:**

For the purpose of this Policy, “PHA Premises” includes the following areas:

1. Conventional Sites
  - a) All occupied and vacant residential units and buildings owned by PHA; and
  - b) The grounds of any PHA development, with the exception of any designated smoking area(s).
2. Scattered Sites
  - a) All occupied and vacant residential units and buildings in Scattered Sites owned by PHA; and
  - b) The grounds of any property owned by PHA.

Smoking: Inhaling, exhaling, breathing, burning of any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, other tobacco products, or similarly lighted smoking material in any manner or in any form. Electronic or “e-cigarettes” are permitted.

## FACT SHEET

1. Over 300 public housing authorities have become smoke-free since 2004 and HUD has issued notices encouraging housing authorities to become smoke-free (For example: "Because Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) can migrate between units in multifamily housing, causing respiratory illness, heart disease, cancer, and other adverse health effects in neighboring families, the Department is encouraging PHAs to adopt non-smoking policies." HUD Notice PIH-2009- 21 (HA)).
2. According to figures from 2012, provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: there are over 440,000 preventable deaths per year from smoking; approximately 46,000 are victims of second-hand smoke, to which children are especially vulnerable; and up to 85% of the smoke from a cigarette circulates as second-hand smoke.
3. "[T]obacco smoke exposure in public housing is particularly troubling because it afflicts disadvantaged and vulnerable populations." (Winickoff, J., MD., M Gottlieb, J.D., and M. Mello, J.D., Ph.D. "Regulation of Smoking in Public Housing." *The New England Journal of Medicine* (2004): 2319-325. Web. Jan. 2013.). Also, residents of public housing generally have fewer options, in terms of moving to escape the health and wellness dangers of second or third-hand smoke.
4. Second-hand smoke causes disease and kills children and adults who don't smoke and it cannot effectively be removed from buildings through ventilation systems or by separating smokers from non-smokers. (2014 data from the American Cancer Society).
5. Tobacco smoke can travel through shared ventilation, plumbing and electrical lines; under doors; and through cracks in walls. Air quality tests have shown that up to 60% of the air in a multi-unit apartment can come from another unit. ("Housing Authorities/Commissions which have adopted smoking policies." *The Center for Social Gerontology*. The Center for Social Gerontology, 20 Jan. 2011. Web. 24 Nov. 2013).
6. Third-hand smoke, the residue left in a unit occupied by a smoker, has been linked to health hazards and is also costly: it often costs two to three times more to clean up and turn over a unit that has been smoked in compared to a smoke-free unit. (Smoke-Free Housing Coalition of Maine, "Myth vs. Reality." N.p., n.d. Web. Jan. 2012).
7. Nationwide, smoking was the leading cause of fatal fires from 2007 to 2011, accounting for 22 percent of the blazes in which a civilian died, according to the National Fire Protection Association and approximately 25% of victims who die in smoking-related fires in the United States are not the smoker whose cigarette caused the fire. The fatality rate of smoking-related fires is eight times greater than other fires and the injury rate is three times greater
8. In a survey done by PHA, consisting of twenty questions pertaining to smoking, health, and smoking behavior to 4,851 households, the response rate was 7.9%. The responses showed that 35% of the respondents are smokers or live with a smoker; 55% of the respondents support a policy prohibiting smoking in residential units; and 74% believe a smoke-free policy would improve residents' health.