

# GOING SMOKE-FREE STEP-BY-STEP

Considering going smoke-free? Just like you may adopt any other lease addendum, you can adopt and enforce a no-smoking policy. While the terms of your property's lease control the process, these general steps can help you through the implementation process.

## Step One: Decide Which Areas the Policy Will Cover

- **Individual units:** Covering all residential units ensures that smoke cannot drift from one unit to another unit in the building.
- **Outdoor areas:** Depending on your situation and location, you can choose to prohibit smoking in all outdoor areas, only allow smoking in designated outdoor areas, or allow smoking in all outdoor areas.

If you choose to designate an outdoor smoking area it should be a considerable distance (recommended 25 feet) away from entrances, windows, patios, balconies, and ventilation intakes. This prevents smoke from drifting into the building and prevents fires from starting in those areas.

- **Common areas:** Wisconsin law prohibits smoking in the "common areas of multiple-unit residential properties." Wis. Stat. § 101.123(2)(a)(8d). Smoking is not allowed in enclosed places of employment and public places, including, but not limited to, management offices, maintenance rooms, stairways, basements, lobbies, community rooms, laundry rooms, fitness rooms, or swimming pool rooms. Signs should be posted in common areas.

### Smoke-Free Options by Level of Coverage

- ★ Building Only, Including Individual Units
- ★★ Smoke-Free Patios and Balconies
- ★★★ Smoke-Free Entrances  
(at least 25ft recommended)
- ★★★★ Outdoor Designated Smoking Area
- ★★★★★ 100% Entire Property, Indoors and Out

### Consider a Survey to Help Inform Your Decision

Conducting a survey serves a few purposes:

- Gathers information on who currently allows smoking in their unit
- Shows how many residents would welcome the policy
- Alerts residents that change may be ahead

Use a [sample survey](#) to send to residents.

## Step Two: Modify Your Lease

- Consult with an attorney to modify this [Model Smoke-Free Lease Addendum](#) for your property.
- A smoke-free policy should:
  - Define smoking
  - List the places where smoking is and is not allowed
  - State who the policy applies to (residents, guests, staff, service persons...)
  - Set the effective date of the policy
  - Have clear enforcement procedures



### Step Three: Set a Smoke-Free Date

- Set an "effect date" for the new smoke-free policy.
  - New residents and all lease renewals will be asked to sign the policy after this date.
- Notify residents you are going smoke-free with this [notification letter](#).
- There are two different strategies for converting to a smoke-free property:
  - **"Phase-in" method:** This process typically takes one year (or the length of your longest lease period). New residents who move into the building sign a smoke-free lease addendum or policy. The policy change is announced to current residents and as their leases renew, they sign a smoke-free lease addendum or policy.
  - **"Quit-date" method:** For properties with periodic or month-to-month leases, this process may only take a few of months. Decide the "effect date." Give your residents notice of the policy change and tell them that they must sign a smoke-free lease addendum or policy by a certain date (usually a few weeks before the policy change).

#### Sample Timeframe

##### 6-12 months out

Send residents a [notification letter](#)  
Provide cessation resources

##### 1-2 months out

Order or print signage  
Send residents a [reminder letter](#)

##### 2-4 weeks out

Post signage

##### "Effect date"

All new residents and renewing leases  
have signed the smoke-free policy

**SIGNING TIP:** Offer an incentive to sign the smoke-free policy early. Incentives could include a discount on rent or other bonuses your property may be able to offer.

### Step Four: Post Signs and Remind Residents

- Signs that remind that a policy is coming can be posted in common areas, around the property, and/or in the rental office.
- Send out a [reminder letter](#) to residents a few days prior to the policy going into effect.
- Post signs at the entrances to the buildings and anywhere else on your property where you want to ensure that no smoking occurs.
- Our sample signs on [www.wismokefreehousing.com](http://www.wismokefreehousing.com) can get you started.

### Step Five: Enforce Your Policy

- Enforce a smoke-free policy the way you would enforce any other lease violation.
- Check out our going smoke-free enforcement tips to increase compliance and deal with violations.

For more information on smoke-free housing visit  
[www.wismokefreehousing.com](http://www.wismokefreehousing.com)

