

Breathe Better in Healthy Homes

an initiative of Breathe New Hampshire



FACT SHEET

VENTILATION IS NOT ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Secondhand smoke spreads throughout apartment buildings:

- Commercial air filtering systems are designed to remove the odor, not the cancer-causing substances.
- Shared ventilation systems can cause tobacco smoke to blow from one room to another.
- Increased building ventilation alone will not be effective to reduce exposures of non-smokers to secondhand smoke generated.
- Secondhand Smoke can seep into and out of open windows and doorways.
- High levels of nicotine gas and other particles in secondhand smoke can remain in the air and on surfaces in a room for several hours.
- Secondhand smoke does not respect boundaries, seeping through light fixtures, ceiling crawl spaces and doorways into all areas of a building.
- Air quality studies in apartment buildings show that anywhere from 5% to 60% of the air in apartment units comes from other units in the building.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) have indicated that to date there is no ventilation system that can effectively combat all of the effects of secondhand smoke.