

Smoke-Free Housing Policies

An Information Summary for Guelph Non-Profit Housing

Why Should Smoke-Free Housing be a Priority?

Financial Considerations

- **Insurance Premiums**
 - Housing Services Corporation provides as immediate 5% reduction in insurance premium
 - Some tenants enjoy a 5% discount on their content and liability coverage if their housing provider has a no-smoking policy for the property

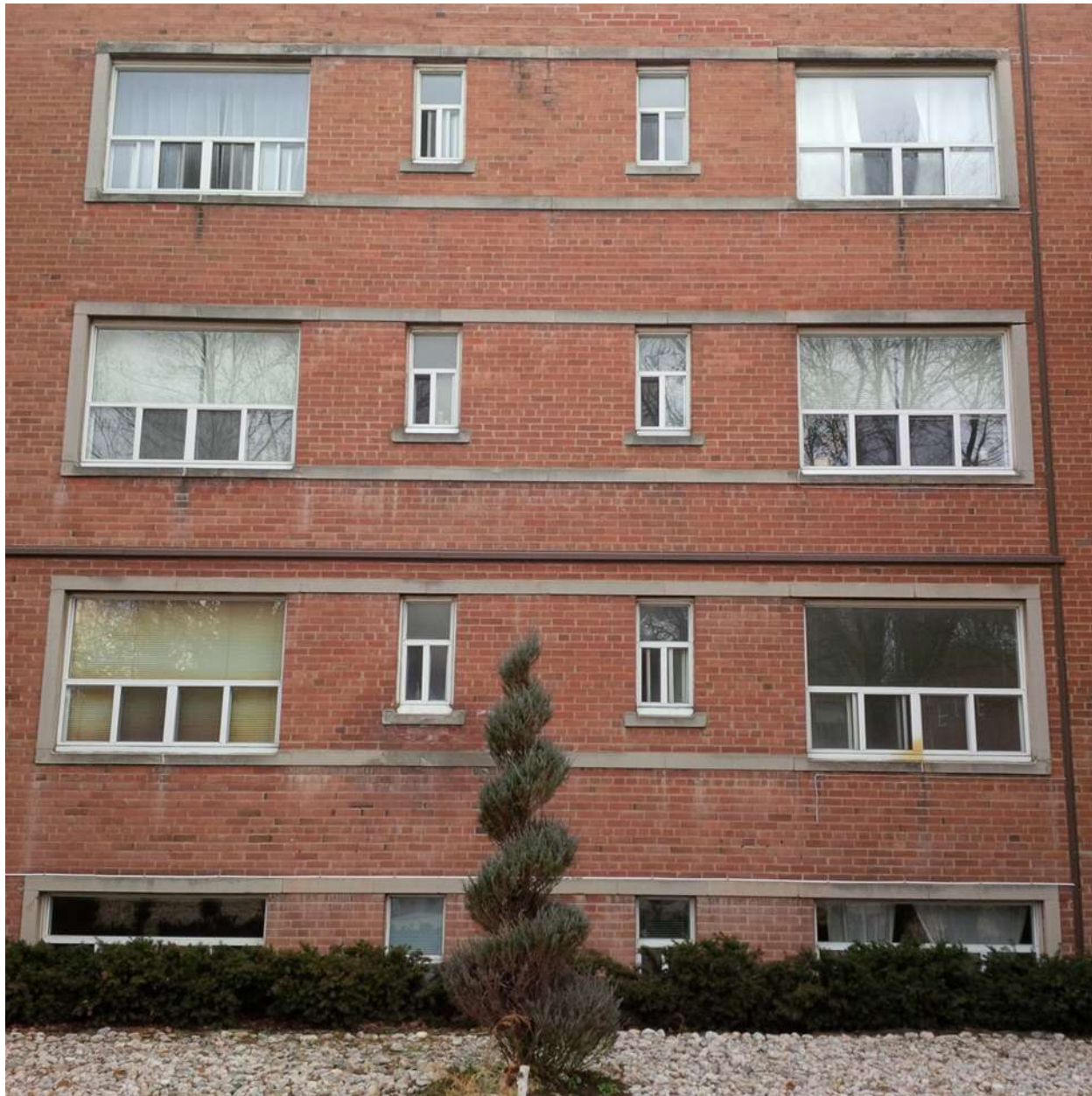
Smoke-free policies reduce costs for private and public housing providers

- **Rehabilitating units where smoking has occurred is expensive**
 - Studies by Smoke-free Housing New England found that for heavy smokers it can cost as much as \$3000 per unit
 - Canadian experience is similar: management of Waterloo Region Housing estimate it can cost up to \$5000 a unit
- **Property values are enhanced by smoke-free policies**
 - A 2013 survey of real estate professionals by Ipsos Canada found that smoking negatively affected the resale value of properties by up to 29%

Financial Considerations

- **Second-hand smoke costs landlords money**
 - 2-3x cost to turnover smoking vs. non-smoking unit
 - Increased cleaning, priming and painting, resurfacing, repairing damage from burns, stains and residues, replacing carpet or other textiles
 - Costs can skyrocket





Smoke-free policies prevent fires and can save lives

“ Cigarettes, pipes, and cigars ranked as the number one ignition source for residential fire fatalities, and one in four home fire fatalities are caused by smoking articles.”

- - Ontario Fire Marshal



Careless smoking to blame for \$2 million Vimy fire

Renfrew Mercury
By Lucy Mack 2/5

Renfrew Fire Chief Guy Longtin says careless smoking was the cause of a major fire Jan. 7 at the 42-unit Vimy Boulevard Apartments in Renfrew. The findings of the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office investigation was reported to Renfrew town council at its regular meeting last night at Ma-Ta-Way Park. Damage to the apartment complex is estimated at \$2 million.

A 44-year-old man was transported to, and remains at, the Ottawa General Hospital with serious injuries.

A second man, 57, was also transported by ambulance to Renfrew Victoria Hospital and later released.

One firefighter was also taken to hospital with chest pains and later released.

In a Friday, Jan. 9 news release, the building's owner – the Renfrew County Housing Corporation – said tenants in the undamaged two-storey wing of the complex should be able to return to their apartments in two weeks' time.



Careless smoking cause of Vimy fire

Lucy Mack
The Ontario Fire Marshal's Office has determined careless smoking was the cause of last week's apartment fire in Renfrew.

Fire at 15 Edward Street claims life of 79-year-old woman

Officials have completed their investigation into a fire at an apartment unit at 15 Edward Street on Sunday, April 5th.

The fire claimed the life of a 79-year-old woman. Firefighters extinguished the fire and found the victim upon the initial search of the scene. She was removed from the apartment unit and treated by firefighters before paramedics arrived on scene. She was pronounced dead a short time later.

The Cornwall Fire Department received the call for the fire at 15 Edward at 6:20 pm on Sunday. Residents from the third floor of the housing complex were evacuated while crews battled the fire, which was contained to a single unit. A Cornwall Transit bus was brought on scene to provide temporary shelter for the displaced residents and members of the Red Cross were also on hand to provide assistance.

Sunday's incident follows another fatal fire that occurred on Friday, April 3rd in the 100 block of Sixth Street West. That fire claimed the life of a 57-year-old man.

In both cases, the fires were caused by smoking articles.

"Smoking and kitchen fires are the two leading causes of fires in Ontario," said Cornwall Fire Chief Richard McCullough. "I would urge all residents to be mindful when it comes to smoking and cooking in their residence."

The investigation of the fires was conducted by the Ontario Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM), Cornwall Fire Prevention Division and Cornwall Community Police Services.

[cornwall ontario, fire, headlines, seniors](#)

Published Tuesday, December 30, 2014 4:03PM EST

The victim of an Owen Sound apartment fire has now been identified.

Police say a 78-year-old Julia Ann Leslie was pulled from her smoke-filled eighth floor apartment on Sunday, but efforts to revive her were unsuccessful.

A joint investigation by the Coroner's Office, the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office and Owen Sound Police Service found Leslie died from smoke inhalation.

RELATED STORIES

- [Woman dead following Owen Sound apartment fire](#)

The investigation also found [the fire was started by a lit cigarette.](#)

Public demand for smoke-free policies is extremely high

- **Nine out of ten adults in Ontario (89%) believe that smoking should not be allowed in multi-unit housing (CAMH Monitor Report, 2014)**
 - **1/3 of multi-unit housing residents reported tobacco smoke entering their homes in Ontario (OTRU, 2014)**
 - **The level of support on this issue has increased dramatically since 2005 when support levels were at 73%**
 - **Eight out ten Ontarians who live in multi-unit housing, given a choice, would prefer a smoke-free building (Ipsos, 2010)**

Health Considerations



- A lot has been done, yet many Ontario residents still find themselves being exposed to unwanted smoke in the one place where they should feel the most safe, their homes.
- Second-hand smoke is more than a nuisance—it is a toxic mix of more than 4,000 chemicals - “Group A” carcinogen
- Exposure in home settings is long-term and can be for extended hours (e.g. while sleeping), which makes it a serious health concern
- Smoke-free policies are the most effective way of reducing second-hand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing

Vulnerable populations

- Second-hand smoke causes cancer, heart problems, and worsens asthma, COPD, and other illnesses in non-smokers
- Babies exposed to second-hand smoke are at a greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Children are especially at risk because they breathe more frequently and are still developing
- A smoke-free policy shows youth that tobacco use is not the norm and can help provide positive role-modelling.
- Seniors are also at higher risk because they are more likely to have medical conditions affecting the heart and lungs

Smoke-free policies are legal and enforceable

- Residential Tenancies Act currently open for comment until June 30
- Legal options exist for creating enforceable policies in multi-unit housing in Ontario
- Social norms are different today
- Tenants who breach a no-smoking policy are the exception not the norm
- **Non-Profit Rental**
 - Policies can be created through a lease enforced under the Landlord and Tenant Act
 - Existing tenants must be grandfathered
 - Enforcement tends to be complaint driven

Grandfathering

- **ALL current tenants would be ‘grandfathered’ in and exempted from the new non-smoking policy**
 - Only NEW leases would be affected, therefore people moving in would be made aware of the policy up front, before moving in

Current Smokers (Past 30 Days), Ontario, 18+

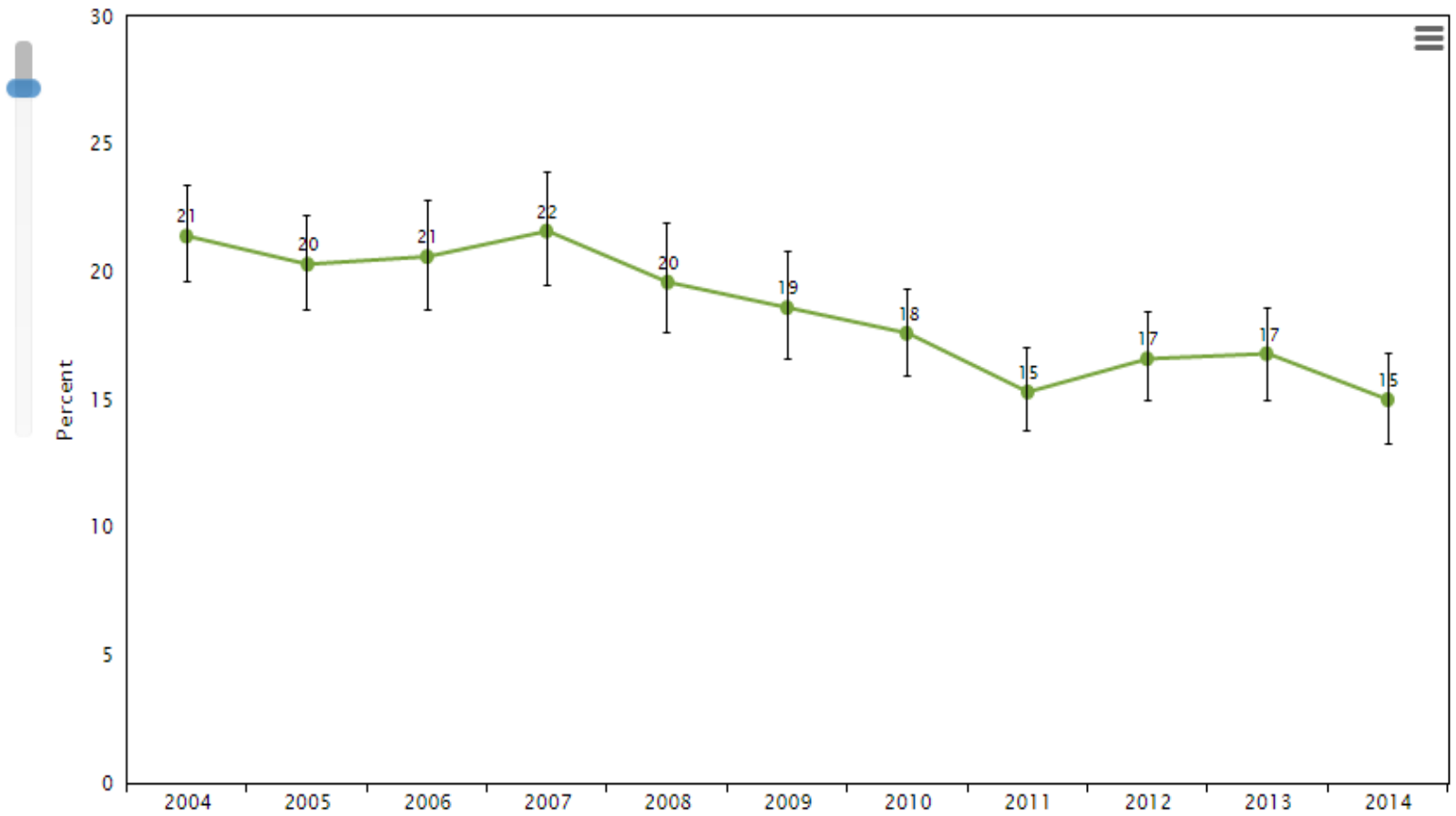


Chart Notes

But what about personal choice?

- The issue of choice is important for both smokers and non-smokers
- For the vulnerable populations in our community such as those living with low income, finding smoke-free accommodation can be especially difficult
- The opportunity to live smoke-free should be available to all Canadians regardless of their income

Push-back from residents?



- **We will see from the survey however:**
 - 85% of Ontario residents are non-smokers
 - Of those who do smoke, many don't smoke inside their homes anyway
 - There is likely to be a small minority of opposition, however these residents would be grandfathered in and the new policy would not effect them

Just making sure....

A no-smoking policy

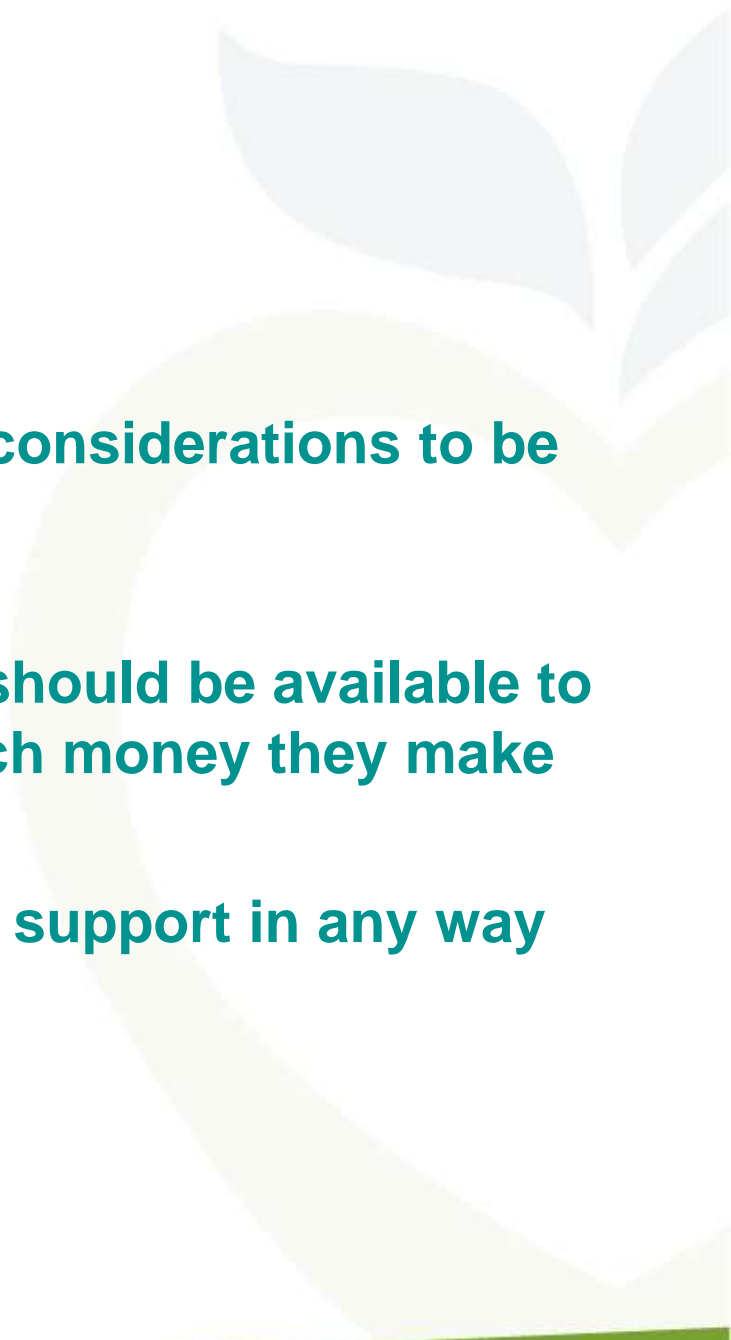
- Does NOT prohibit people who smoke from renting accommodations
- Does NOT mean tenants will be evicted because they smoke
- Does NOT force tenants to quit smoking
- ONLY applies to new tenants moving in


The Role of Public Health



- **Very happy to provide any support we can such as:**
 - Prepare, distribute, collect and analyze survey for tenants
 - Draft a smoke-free policy
 - Create a communications strategy for tenants
 - Cessation support

In Conclusion

- **Financial, safety, equity and health considerations to be made**
 - **The opportunity to live smoke-free should be available to all Ontarians regardless of how much money they make**
 - **Public Health is more than happy to support in any way possible**
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- **“With the support and co-operation of the Board, management and staff, going smoke-free has been one of the easiest policies to implement,”**

- Carol Barber Program Manager, Cochrane District
Social Services Administration

Thank You



Laura Campbell

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

519 822-2715 x 4208

Laura.Campbell@wdgpublichealth.ca