

S A F E T Y

November, 2015



Change your Clocks and Check ALL Detectors!

According to the NFPA, working smoke detectors cut the risk in half of dying in a residential fire. Smoke detectors have been required in all rental units in Washington State since December 1981. According to WAC 51-51-0314, smoke alarms must be installed (1) in each sleeping room; (2) outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms; (3) on each story of the dwelling including basements and habitable attics and (4) in napping areas in a family home child care.

If tenants complain that their smoke detector sounds off every time someone cooks or showers, they likely have an ionization detector. If the detector is relatively new, the problem may be fixed by reinstalling the unit at least 20 feet away from the stovetop or bathroom door. If the detector is nearing 10 years of age (as determined by the date of manufacture on the back label), replace it with a photoelectric one. Photoelectric detectors have fewer nuisance alarms. They also detect smoldering fires much faster than ionization detectors. Smoke alarms, whether hardwired or screwed into the ceiling, cannot reliably be expected to work if they are more than ten years old.

As of January 2013, all residential rental units must have working carbon monoxide (CO) detectors installed. CO detectors in rentals must be installed on every level of the home outside the sleeping areas. These units are required even if the rental is fully electric because, in power outages, individuals have used generators without adequate ventilation or have brought hibachis or barbecue units indoors to cook food. Multiple fatalities and CO poisoning incidents that occurred during a severe winter storm in 2006 initiated our statewide mandate for CO detector protection. Carbon monoxide detectors must be replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions. Many CO detectors last just five to seven years. Newer models may last up to ten years.



The Great American Smoke Out and More

The third Thursday of November has been designated “The Great American Smoke Out” since 1977. Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) has a new “Step-by-Step Guide to Smoke-Free Housing” that may help you provide a safer and healthier environment beyond the one day of November 19th! Their document provides a listing of several free smoke cessation resources that may be of help for your tenants and staff. It also serves as a tool kit that summarizes the advantages of smoke-free housing and offers templates to assist apartment managers and residents develop and maintain a smoke-free policy.

According to studies cited in SRHD’s report, there are significant indicators of community support for smoke-free housing. For example: 74% of Spokane County residents in multi-unit housing prefer smoke-free rentals; 60% of multi-unit housing properties in Spokane County do not allow smoking in units; 95% of Spokane Housing Authority residents reported they would renew their leases due to a no-smoking indoor policy; and 75% of people who smoke in Washington prefer to live in smoke-free housing.

To learn more about the benefits of a no-smoking policy, contact the SRHD Tobacco Prevention and Control program at 509.324.1530 or read their report at <http://www.srhd.org/documents/Tobacco/SmokeFreeHousing2.pdf>.

In addition to reduced costs for rehabilitating units when smokers move out, landlords may find additional cost reductions from insurance providers for smoke-free residences.

Health problems associated with second-hand smoke are addressed by laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. And the bottom line from Fire Departments across America is this: smoking is still the number one cause of residential fire fatalities!

*Have a Happy (and Safely Cooked)
Thanksgiving! Celebration!*



You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jan Doherty at jdoherty@spokanefire.org or by calling 509.625.7058.



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