



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2012-10-24 (2)

DATE: October 24, 2012
TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Michael Mirra, Executive Director
RE: Non-Smoking Policies for THA Properties

Background

Staff strongly recommends that THA prohibit smoking in all of its properties, including the inside of dwelling units. Below I restate the reasons. They summarize the information that the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and others provided to the Board at the July 17th study session regarding this topic:

- Second hand smoke poses serious health risks to neighboring residents, guests and THA staff who have to enter these units. These health risks imperil two fundamental obligations that THA has as landlord and employer: to provide safe housing to its residents; to provide safe working conditions to its staff.
- Smoking increases THA's property management costs;
- Smoking leads to greater risk of fire and increased insurance rates;
- According to the Health Department's survey of all of THA's resident, the majority of them favors non-smoking housing;
- A smoking ban would improve the marketability of THA's dwelling units;
- A smoking ban may decrease the smoking rates of THA's residents;
- Other public housing authorities and property managers have had positive experiences implementing non-smoking policies;
- HUD recommends that housing authorities implement non-smoking policies.

During the July 17th study session, the Commissioners offered a number of suggestions and requested some additional information. In response we have done the following:

- We have narrowed the proposed prohibition so that it does not restrict the use of candles, incense and barbeque grills;
- I attach the results from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department of its survey of THA residents.
- I attached what little information staff could obtain about the arguments against these types of policies;
- Staff held eleven (11) public hearings throughout the portfolio. In general, public comments favored this policy and asked for clear guidance about where smokers will be able to smoke on THA properties I attach the comments offered at the public hearings.

I also attach the draft Non-Smoking Lease Addendum. If the Board approves this resolution, staff will notify all residents that it will become effective March 1, 2013. This delayed effective date serves three purposes: (1) it will give residents that time to adjust to this new rule; (2) it will give each property time to identify outdoor areas where smoking will be allowed; (3) it will allow THA staff and representatives from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and the Tobacco Free Alliance to offer residents smoking cessation and tobacco replacement resources.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution 2012-10-24 (2) authorizing the THA staff to implement a Non-Smoking lease addendum for all new and existing residents at THA properties.



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2012-10-24 (2)

PROHIBITION OF SMOKING IN THA UNITS

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners must approve all revisions to THA's public housing leases;

WHEREAS, providing safe housing is a fundamental attribute of THA's obligation as a landlord and providing a safe working environment is a fundamental attribute of THA's obligation as an employer;

WHEREAS, second hand smoke in THA's residential units poses serious health risks to other residents, guests and THA staff and for that reason it prevents THA from fulfilling these fundamental obligations as landlord and employer;

WHEREAS, smoking also makes the management of the portfolio more expensive and difficult;

WHEREAS, a survey of THA's residents indicates that most of them favor a prohibition of smoking.

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City Of Tacoma, Washington, that:

THA staff is authorized to implement a Non-Smoking lease addendum for all new and existing residents at all THA properties after March 1, 2013.

Approved: October 24, 2012


Janis Flauding, Chairperson