

Q: How can my community curb drifting secondhand smoke at mobile home parks?

A: Communities can address drifting secondhand smoke by adopting a smokefree policy at the mobile home park or a smokefree multi-unit housing law that applies to mobile home parks.



There are more than 500,000 mobile homes in California,¹ and many are located in mobile home parks. The homes in mobile home parks are often close together, increasing the risk that secondhand smoke may drift from one home to another.^{2,3,4} Secondhand smoke exposure is especially concerning in mobile home parks because families who live in mobile homes are more likely both to die in a fire and to be exposed to toxic substances like formaldehyde.⁵ Environmental contaminants such as ambient formaldehyde and secondhand smoke interact and may become more dangerous, increasing residents' risk for a wide range of health conditions, from inflammation of the lungs to cancer.⁶

Currently, no California state law specifically prohibits smoking at mobile home parks. The state smokefree workplace law protects workers from secondhand smoke and prohibits smoking in "enclosed areas" at "places of employment."⁷ For example, this law would prohibit smoking in enclosed spaces at mobile home parks, such as managers' offices, school rooms, or community rooms, but it would not extend to unenclosed spaces or the mobile homes themselves, unless they are places of employment.⁸

To address secondhand smoke exposure in mobile home parks, residents could ask their mobile home park owners to adopt a policy prohibiting smoking in areas within the park. The community could survey mobile home residents to find out how many are affected by drifting secondhand smoke.

Some communities have strengthened the state law protections by enacting local smokefree housing laws that prohibit smoking in and around multi-unit residences.⁹ However, mobile home parks often are exempt from these laws. Some jurisdictions explicitly exclude mobile homes from the definition of housing "unit,"¹⁰ while others do so implicitly by limiting the definition of multi-unit housing to buildings containing multiple units or units that share walls, floors, or ceilings.¹¹

A community could adopt a smokefree housing law that broadly defines "unit" to include mobile homes and "multi-unit residence" to mean any property containing two or more units, which would encompass the mobile home park. A community could conduct an assessment to determine whether mobile homes are located close enough together for smoke to drift between homes before deciding whether to include mobile homes in a local smokefree housing law.



Communities interested in adopting laws that prohibit smoking in multi-unit housing should [contact ChangeLab Solutions](#) and review our [Smokefree Housing resources](#), including our [Model Smokefree Housing Ordinance](#).

To learn more, visit: www.changelabsolutions.org/tobacco-control.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2013 3-Year Am. Cmty. Survey. 2013. Available at www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/summary_file/.
2. See Repace M. Benefits of Smoke-Free Regulations in Outdoor Settings: Beaches, Golf Courses, Parks, Patios, and in Motor Vehicles. 34 WM. MITCHELL L. REV. 1621, 1626. 2008. (Citing experiments showing that outdoor tobacco smoke levels did not approach background levels either for fine particles or carcinogens until about 23 feet from the source.)
3. See Hwang J, Lee K. Determination of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Exposure by Distance from a Smoking Source Nicotine & Tobacco Research. 2014; 16(4):478-484. Available at doi:10.1093/ntr/ntt178. (Citing experiments showing that outdoor tobacco smoke was detectable at 9 meters away from a single cigarette smoking.)
4. See Klepeis NE. Real-Time Measurement of Outdoor Tobacco Smoke Particles. Journal of the Air & Waste Management Association. 2007; 57(5):522-534. Available at www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3155/1047-3289.57.5.522. (Citing experiments showing that tobacco smoke travels through open spaces even under certain wind conditions.)
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2011. Safety and Health in Manufactured Structures. Atlanta, GA. Available at www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/manufactured_structures.pdf.
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institute of Health National Cancer Institute. 2008–2009 Annual Report of the President’s Cancer Panel: Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk What We Can Do Now. 2010. Available at http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/annualReports/pcp08-09rpt/PCP_Report_08-09_508.pdf.
7. Cal. Lab. Code § 6404.5.
8. See Cal. Lab. Code § 6404.5(d)(11).
9. See The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing, American Lung Association in California. Local California Smokefree Housing Policies: Detailed Analysis. 2013. Available at <http://center4tobaccopolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Local-California-Smokefree-Housing-Policies-Detailed-Analysis-December-2013.pdf>.
10. See generally the municipal codes of Petaluma, San Rafael, Sausalito, Baldwin Park, Sonoma County, Pasadena, Fairfax, Union City, Santa Clara County, South Pasadena, Eureka, and Pinole.
11. See generally the municipal codes of Lafayette, Daly City, Marin County, Contra Costa County, Burbank, Sebastopol, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, Rohnert Park, and Belmont.

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