

Temporary Fixes

If you are bothered by secondhand smoke (SHS) in your unit, there are numerous repairs that may be helpful in reducing the health risks associated by SHS exposure in your unit. However, these changes may help to reduce secondhand smoke, but they will not make your unit 100% smoke free.

The only way to do that is by having a smoke-free building. The 2006 Surgeon General's Report, "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," concluded that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke, and the only way to protect people from the dangers of SHS is to eliminate the exposure.¹ If you are interested on how to completely eliminate SHS for your unit see, [Promoting Smoke-Free Policies](#).

You may be able to do some repairs yourself. Other repairs may need to be approved by the manager. Check your lease to see what types of repairs are allowed. Keep in mind that these repairs will not eliminate your exposure 100%.

- Multi-unit housing units are separated by walls and floors. Secondhand smoke can travel through these openings. You can fill in the openings by using tape, caulk or foam. Foam is good for filling and sealing cracks and gaps around pipes or other openings.
- Smoke can travel through the space around electrical outlets and switches. Install pads and seals around electrical outlets and switches.
- Smoke can come in from gaps at the bottom and sides of doors. Door bottoms, seals and door sweeps can help stop traveling smoke. Weather stripping can be used on doors and windows to help stop smoke from getting in or out.
- Install fans and increase outside air. Running a fan may help move the smoke outdoors or move outdoor air into your unit. The success of running a fan may depend on other factors like the direction of the wind outside or the direction of a draft inside. Air cleaners often mask the smoke odor but do not rid a unit of smoke itself.
- Ask smokers to restrict smoking. Some smokers may be willing not to smoke near openings, windows, or doors.
- Post a "no smoking" sign on your door indicating that you support smoke-free homes.

1. US Department of Health and Human Services. (2006) The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services