

NEWS RELEASE

Panhandle

Public Health District

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For immediate release.

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Upcoming smoke-free housing series aims to support the health and safety of residents, property owners, landlords, and housing authority reps

A three-part series on ***Smoke-Free Housing for Multi-Unit Housing*** can help residents, property owners, landlords, and housing authority representatives learn how to successfully implement, enhance, or enforce a smoke-free policy. The series are upcoming in May. Speakers Char Day with the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Foundations and Jeff Soukup with Tobacco Free Nebraska are excited to lead us in the series.

30-minute virtual learning and discussion sessions will be on May 19, May 26, and June 2, 2021 from 12:00-12:30 p.m. MST. Bring questions and plan to interact with the experts! If people attend all three sessions, they will be put into a drawing for some great prizes. Registration is available at <https://tinyurl.com/3kef99jh>.

Second-hand smoke exposure is a serious health threat to adults and children. Residents living in multi-unit housing are at particular risk due to common area use and frequent interactions between residents. Working to fix this issue was the move to have public and private multi-unit housing properties become smoke-free.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made all public housing smoke-free in July 2018. This helps protect residents from the dangers of second-hand smoke, save property owners money, and lower the risk of fire damage to units. Nathan Flowers, Fire Chief with Gering Fire Department emphasized why it is important to make sure residents are not smoking in housing units:

"I cannot stress enough the hazards associated with smoking. Not only it is a health issue, but it is also a fire prevention issue. Cigarettes have hit close to home, and many local fires have been determined to start by discarded cigarettes. Firefighters bear witness to destruction and loss of life caused by something that is easily preventable. Smoking material started an estimated 17,200 fires in 2014. These fires caused 570 deaths and 1,140 injuries with over \$426 million in direct property damage. Electronic cigarettes have also caused significant injuries and damage. If you must, please smoke outside. Put cigarettes out all the way. Be alert and never smoke after taking medication that makes you tired. Never smoke around medical oxygen. Never discard your cigarettes outdoors and use an approved container. And please, never smoke in bed!"

Join us for this educational learning series. For more information, contact Melissa Haas, Environmental Health Coordinator at 308-487-3600 Ext. 108.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle community.