



# ISSUE SHEET

## Smoke Free Policy

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Prepared by

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### **REPORT SUMMARY**

To provide the Fort Frances Municipal Non Profit Housing Corp. (FFMNPHC) Board of Directors with information related to the implementation of a Smoke Free Policy.

### **BACKGROUND**

The RRDSSAB recognizes the health hazards of exposure to second-hand smoke and is committed to the health and safety of our tenants and staff. The implementation of a Smoke Free Policy will help provide for a safer living and working environment. The RRDSSAB has researched, explored and consulted on the development of a Smoke Free Policy.

There are currently provincial laws and municipal bylaws in place that limit where people can smoke, which include common areas within shared accommodation.

The establishment of a policy to institute smoke free housing follows the rationale of reducing the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and supports the rights of tenants to reasonable enjoyment of their homes. Across the province, many social housing providers have implemented smoke free policies and these have been generally well received. Tenants and the public are more accepting of smoke free spaces and understand the benefits of establishing clear policies for all to follow.

There is no legislation that prohibits a landlord from banning smoking in a leased unit. It is legal for a Smoke Free Policy to be included in a Lease Agreement. The Landlord and Tenant Board have extensive rulings where the smoke free terms contained in a lease have been upheld. A Smoke Free Policy does not discriminate against smokers, but it does protect the rights of those who do not wish to be exposed to second-hand smoke.

RRDSSAB does receive complaints from tenants regarding neighbours in buildings who smoke, as the smell of the smoke travels between units. Although there has been no incidents where smoking has resulted in fire damage in one of your housing units, there was one incident in December of 2014 in one of the

Non Profit family units. Although the fire started on the deck of the unit, the damage to the unit & adjoining units was approximately \$100,000.00.

### **COMMENTS**

The goal of a Smoke Free Policy is to reduce and eventually eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke by tenants and staff, and to lowering the maintenance costs in preparing units at turn overs.

Current tenants who choose to smoke will be grandfathered with the previous guidelines around smoking within the properties, and will continue to be permitted to smoke in their units. However, current tenants may choose to sign a new lease and voluntarily make their unit smoke free. All new tenants will be required to comply with the new Policy. The Policy does not prohibit smokers from renting, nor does it force tenants to quit smoking.

In 2016 the Smoke Free Policy went into effect for all RRDSSAB owned housing units.

Upon approval of the Smoke Free Policy, a communications plan will be rolled out to current tenants and to the general public. Signage will be posted at the property and communication tools like the tenant information sheet and tenant meetings will be used to share information.

For future tenants, it will be clear that smokers can still access your housing units, and that we will not exclude any potential tenant because they smoke. Staff will work with tenants to ensure that those who choose to smoke are aware of appropriate areas that will not interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of other tenants. We will continue to work with our tenants to resolve any issues that may arise as a result of implementing this Policy. Opportunities to share information and assist in the provision of smoking cessation services will be developed in consultation with community partners, including the Northwestern Health Unit.

A Smoke Free Policy does not address the use of medical marijuana or E-cigarettes, as these products are subject to different legislation and requirements. The policy is proposed to come into effect on September 1, 2018.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is expected that some cost avoidance related to reduced maintenance, repair and cleaning will be realized. There is the possibility that insurance

premiums would be reduced with the reduced fire risk. Costs associated with communication, including signage, will be covered through current and future operating budgets.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that it is in the best interest of the FFMNPHC to implement a Smoke Free Policy.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Fort Frances Municipal Non Profit Housing Corp. board of directors approve the implementation of a Smoke Free Policy to their housing properties effective September 1, 2018.