

Squamish Condo Complexes are Going Smoke-Free – a New Trend?

The Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Lung Association hope it's a sign of more to come

For Immediate Release

August 2013: It's move-in day. You're making dinner in the great new apartment you just bought. And suddenly you catch a whiff of cigarette smoke coming from next door. If you're a healthy-living type, your home-buyer happiness may be gone in a puff of smoke.

Well homeowners in the downtown Squamish condo complex *The Artisan* decided to get proactive.

A 68-suite (three commercial and 65 residential suites) building, *Artisan* owners have just set a new milestone by voting to become 100 percent smoke-free. BC health advocates the Heart and Stroke Foundation (BC & Yukon) and the BC Lung Association hope it's the sign of a trend.

"We're pretty sure *The Artisan* is the first complex in Squamish to become 100 percent smoke-free," says Mike Young of Dynamic Property Management, the building's property manager, "It was almost unanimous. There are 68 units in the building, including several smokers, however the majority of owners were all for it."

Effective as of June 19, 2013, the smoking ban prohibits tenants, guests and service people from smoking in any area of the property, including both private and common areas, whether enclosed or outdoors.

Young says the ban was motivated chiefly by a desire to reduce the known health effects of second-hand smoke, "The main reason for banning smoking is the effects of second-hand smoke. Even if smoking is restricted to one condo, the vents are common throughout the building and the smoke from one unit will travel through the vent and into other units. This affects the air quality in everyone's condo. *The Artisan's* strata council were constantly fielding complaints about smoke travelling into people's homes – now the problem is solved."

"One of *The Artisan's* commercial suite owners owns a coffee shop, and were very supportive of the ban," continued Young. "I like to think - given Squamish is known as a healthy community and often called the recreational capital of Canada - the decision to go smoke-free fits."

BC health advocates hope this is the start of new trend in the community, and if left to local property management company owner and smoke-free housing champion Mike Young, it may already be one.

Young says, "Since *The Artisan* went 100 percent smoke-free, so has another building we manage. And we're currently working with council members on a third building."

"Second-hand smoke is more than a nuisance, it is a health hazard – and a fire risk," said Mark Collison, Director of Advocacy & Stakeholder Relations for the Heart and Stroke Foundation (B.C. & Yukon). "So unlike a neighbor playing loud music at three in the morning, this can actually affect the health of tenants."

“Owners in The Artisan may well benefit from an increase in the re-sale value of their real estate. There are also significant savings on property maintenance costs,” says Jack Boomer, Director of QuitNow for the BC Lung Association. “Approximately 40 percent of British Columbians live in multi-unit dwellings. The vast majority are non-smokers and would prefer to live in a completely smoke-free environment.”

An April 2013 Angus Reid survey of 833 British Columbians renters and owners living in multi-unit dwellings confirms:

- Two in three report a preference for living in a smoke-free environment
- Two in three report strong support for more condos having smoke-free bylaws
- Nine in 10 do not allow smoking inside their homes
- 50 percent report exposure to second-hand smoke
- 59 percent see second-hand smoke as a health hazard; 49 percent see it as a nuisance

www.smokefreehousingbc.ca

To support those interested in helping increase options for smoke-free housing in BC, the Heart and Stroke Foundation (B.C. & Yukon) established a website providing comprehensive information for landlords, strata councils and tenants. Learn more about how to draft, implement and enforce a smoke-free building policy.

The BC Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundations (B.C. & Yukon) work together to raise public awareness about the serious health risks of exposure to second-hand smoke and to advocate for smoke-free environments for all workers and the public.

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