

## SMOKE FREE | MULTI-UNIT HOUSING NORTH-CAROLINA

# HOBART JACKSON ESTATES (RPM)

Rose Stevens, a property manager with RPM, was the first in her company to introduce a smoke-free policy when she took Hobart Jackson Estates in Reidsville, North Carolina, smoke-free in 2012. Rose was concerned about the high costs of maintaining smokers' units which were up to three times as much as those for non-smokers' units.

More importantly, Rose was concerned about the health of her elderly residents. Rose's mother was a lifelong smoker who died of cancer due to complications from lung disease and emphysema. Rose never smoked herself, but having seen how smoking threatened her family's health, Rose sought out a smoke-free policy to protect the health of her tenants.



Hobart Jackson Estates after going smoke-free. Image credit: Rose Stevens.

## Preparing for a Change

Rose learned about smoke-free policies through online research and talking to others who implemented smoke-free policies. RPM's regional office in Raleigh gave Rose approval to take Hobart Jackson Estates smoke-free and helped her design the policy language. Rose then started preparing her residents for the change. She knew it could be difficult, especially for those who had been smoking most of their lives. Long before the policy change, she held meetings with residents and provided them with information on how to quit.

As the implementation date grew closer, she held several meetings with her smoking residents to discuss ways they could support each other when the new policy went into effect. She then invited nurses and mental health specialists to meet with her residents. Rose made the transition upbeat by having a party to celebrate the new smoke-free policy and residents' decisions to quit smoking.

## How it Works

The policy prohibits smoking inside buildings, but allows residents to smoke outdoors. Residents get written up if they smoke in their units, similar to any other lease violation.

Rose says there were nine smokers at the property when the new policy began, but the majority of them didn't have any problems with it because they already smoked outside. Rose has not had to evict anyone for violating the no-smoking policy.

All 36 units at Hobart Jackson Estates are now smoke-free. Rose says she is very proud of RPM'S policy for Hobart Jackson:

*“We are saving a lot of money for the company, but I also know that I'm helping residents in the long run. People are well taken care of here.”*

Implementing smoke-free policies at properties for elderly residents may take effort at first, but overcoming challenges is doable. Rose was successful by obtaining input from her residents and providing them with resources to quit smoking.

## Smart Tips

- Be a good listener, patient and respectful towards residents throughout the transition.
- Maintain positive relationships with residents.
- Provide cessation support resources for residents.



A “No Smoking” sign is posted outside of a building at Hobart Jackson Estates. Image credit: Rose Stevens.

### To hear other property owners' and managers' stories:

Visit the NC Division of Public Health's Smoke-Free Housing Website at

<http://www.smokefreehousingnc.com>



NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch



North Carolina  
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