



Hilltop House

Molecular sensor technology helps property identify smoking and enforce lease violations with definitive proof.



Property Type: HUD Public Housing Apartments

Location: Seattle, WA U.S.A.

Size: 124 Units

Challenges

- Unauthorized smoking of tobacco and marijuana by residents
- Difficulty in proving smoking by residents without hard proof
- Inability to enforce lease violations to meet smoke-free

Solution

- Provide residents with written materials and education on the smoking detection program
- Monitor apartments for tobacco and marijuana smoke with FreshAir molecular sensors

Results

- Deterred smoking across the property
- Significant drop in reported smoking instances and odors
- Ongoing long-term relationship with FreshAir Sensor due to excellent customer service

"I would (and do) absolutely recommend the product because it does what it promises it will do."

- Thornton Bowman, Executive Director

Interview with Thornton Bowman, Executive Director

The Hilltop House is an affordable housing non-profit serving people 62 and older in Seattle, WA. Many of their residents have been smoking (either tobacco or marijuana) for many years and are disinclined to stop their habit despite the property's strict non-smoking policies.

Hilltop House management faced challenges in preventing unauthorized smoking, and also had difficulties in enforcing lease violations. "Unfortunately, for me the Landlord, I cannot accuse someone of a smoking violation unless there is real proof." says Thornton Bowman, Executive Director of Hilltop House.

While odors of smoke were frequently reported by tenants and staff, the challenge remained unsolvable unless staff were able to catch a tenant in the act. "The main issues I had were that a significant number of tenants would break the rules if they thought they could get away with it," says Bowman. "And indeed, they were getting away with it, which impacted the quality of life for our tenants."

The property began investigating solutions and was attracted to FreshAir Sensor's molecular sensor technology. "We realized that FreshAir Sensor could give us twofold value; an in-unit deterrent to prevent unauthorized smoking, and hard proof of smoking when it occurred." says Bowman.

When implementing FreshAir sensors into their units, Hilltop House provided printed information on the device and technology from FreshAir Sensor to tenants. They were made aware that the devices detect airborne molecules from burning tobacco and marijuana and gave Hilltop House the proof of smoking they needed to enforce lease violations.

When smoking occurs, the property provides the tenant with the specific smoking incident report from the FreshAir Sensor dashboard. "Giving the smoking reports to those who have transgressed has a strong impact because it shows a date and time of when it registered the molecules," says Bowman. "It doesn't stop people from saying the sensor is incorrect, but it never gives a false report from a known non-smoker's apartment, so, that's a pretty convincing argument."

As both a deterrent and enforcement tool, FreshAir Sensor has helped Hilltop House significantly reduce smoking at the property and meet their 100% smoke-free policies.

"We began using FreshAir Sensor because the molecular technology could give us proof of smoking without the need to catch them in the act". Bowman says. "But I have stayed with the company, even when other companies have begun offering similar products, because of the excellent customer service and support provided by the company. From my account representative, to accounting, to tech support, they are all genuinely kind, helpful, and understanding. I would hire all of them. They are demonstrative of a company well run."

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