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REAL ESTATE REPORT

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Smoke-Free Rentals May Be Billowing Trend

By: Jill Urban



One major building management company is just saying "no" to smoking in all of their rental buildings across the country. NY1's Jill Urban filed the following report.

We've seen it in a few buildings here and there, but now one major management company is officially extinguishing smoking in all its rental buildings.

"All of Related's 40,000 apartments around the country are now going to be smoke-free," says Related Management President Jeff Brodsky. "It's a tremendous opportunity for us to take advantage of the scale we offer and to give something to the residents that are looking for the quality of life and wellness commitments that we offer."

Yes, Related Companies has announced it's going smoke-free in all of its rental units nationwide. Brodsky says the company has spent billions on LEED certified new construction and feels this is the next step in offering green living to tenants.

"We believe that a smoke-free environment is actually the most significant indoor air quality commitment you can make to establish sustainable best practices in an apartment community," notes Brodsky.

The new policy has already been implemented and all new leases will include a no smoking rider. Current residents are being asked to sign one immediately and if they choose not to, it will be included in their lease renewal.

This is something that may not sit well with some smokers who say it's an invasion of privacy to limit what they do in their homes.

"I absolutely respect the privacy issues and it is a very specific challenge for us. If I could keep everything inside the apartment it wouldn't be an issue for us. However, smoke does migrate and it's very similar to noise. You will ultimately compromise the quality of life for the people who are your neighbors," says Brodsky.

Smoking bans have been a hot button issue recently as many buildings have started to implement them. But Related is the first major player to call a company-wide ban.

Jhoanna Robledo, a contributing editor at New York Magazine, says it will be interesting to see if this sets a new trend.

"I think it remains to be seen if other landlords follow suit," says Robledo. "Certainly it's a way to distinguish yourself in the marketplace. Those who want to live in a building where there is absolutely no smoking will go to these types of rentals. Those who do want the option or smoke themselves will go elsewhere probably."

And if they choose to stay they will have to take their smoking outside.