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Property Owners Can Protect Renters with Smoke-Free Policy

(Omaha, NE) – Despite the Omaha Fire Department’s work to educate the community on the importance of fire safety during Fire Prevention Week (October 9 – 15), firefighters were called to yet another multi-family housing complex early Friday morning, October 14, to extinguish flames due to the careless discarding of a cigarette on a second floor balcony. This is the third apartment fire in just a week. These smoking-related fires are avoidable with a simple smoke-free policy.

The Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC) has a solution for property owners looking to minimize the threat of smoking-related fires and the extensive costs associated with them. The solution is implementing 100% smoke-free policies for their rental properties. MOTAC has free resources and other information, such as RentSmokeFree.org, to assist property owners in adopting 100% smoke-free policies.

“Preventing apartment fires should be a priority for property owners and tenants alike. Smoking-related fires cause significant damage to properties every year and displace countless residents,” said Mary Crosby, MOTAC Media Chairperson, “We must work together to educate our community on the benefits of renting and living smoke-free.”

Until all property owners and management companies realize the importance of smoke-free apartments and begin to implement those policies, Assistant Fire Marshal Jim Gentile of the Omaha Fire Department requests, “If a tenant is going to smoke it’s important to make sure the cigarette is completely extinguished before disposing of it in a proper, noncombustible receptacle.”

MOTAC is a dynamic coalition comprised of health-related organizations, individuals, and educational groups working together to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the metropolitan Omaha community. For more information, visit www.motac.org.

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