

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 315 (Delegate Washington)
Environment and Transportation

Multifamily Dwellings - Smoking Policies

This bill requires the governing body of a condominium or cooperative housing corporation to develop a smoking policy if the property is a multifamily dwelling.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Definitions

A “multifamily dwelling” means a residential building that is part of a common ownership community (as defined in the bill, a condominium or a cooperative housing corporation) with multiple dwelling units, a common entrance, and common areas (including hallways, elevators, and stairs).

“Smoke” or “smoking” means (1) the inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying of any lighted matter or lighted substance or (2) the use of a device to deliver aerosolized or vaporized vaping liquid, as defined in § 16.7-101 of the Business Regulation Article, to an individual inhaling from the device.

The governing body of a cooperative housing corporation or condominium must develop a smoking policy consistent with § 13-3314 of the Health – General Article if the property subject to the control of the governing body is a multifamily dwelling, as specified. The required smoking policy must state:

- the locations where smoking is authorized on the property;
- the locations where smoking is prohibited on the property;
- any conditions on the ability to smoke in areas of the property where smoking is authorized;
- the process to file a complaint against an individual who violates the policy; and
- any penalties or fines for violating the policy.

The bill may not be construed to (1) limit the rights of a governing body of a common ownership community, tenant, or residential owner to initiate or defend against a civil action or (2) preempt a county or municipal government from enacting and enforcing measures regarding smoking policies in multifamily dwellings that are more stringent than a policy adopted under the bill.

The bill's requirements only apply to multifamily dwellings with four or more dwelling units that are (1) used for the benefit of a residential owner in a common ownership community or (2) rented by the residential owner of the dwelling unit to a tenant under a lease.

Current Law:

Clean Inside Air Act

Pursuant to the Clean Indoor Air Act, except as otherwise specified, a person may not smoke in (1) an indoor area open to the public; (2) an indoor place in which meetings are open to the public; (3) a government-owned or -operated means of mass transportation; (4) an indoor place of employment; (5) a private home used by a licensed/registered child care provider; or (6) a private vehicle used for public transportation of children or as part of health care or child care transportation. The prohibition includes bars, clubs, restaurants, pubs, taverns, retail establishments, theaters, concert halls, athletic facilities, financial service institutions, government buildings, educational institutions, museums, and libraries.

However, the prohibition *does not* apply to (1) private homes or residences, except as specified above; (2) private vehicles, except as specified above; (3) a hotel or motel room as long as the total percent of rooms so used does not exceed 25%; (4) specified tobacco

facilities and retail businesses; or (5) a laboratory for the purpose of conducting scientific research into the health effects of tobacco smoke.

Electronic Smoking Device

Section 16.7-101 of the Business Regulation Article defines an “electronic smoking device” (ESD) as a device that can be used to deliver aerosolized or vaporized nicotine to an individual inhaling from the device. ESD includes (1) an electronic cigarette, an electronic cigar, an electronic cigarillo, an electronic pipe, an electronic hookah, a vape pen, and vaping liquid and (2) any component, part, or accessory of such a device regardless of whether or not it is sold separately, including any substance intended to be aerosolized or vaporized during use of the device. However, ESD excludes (1) a drug, device, or combination product authorized for sale by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under specified federal law or (2) a battery or battery charger when sold separately.

Medical Cannabis

Generally, § 13-3314 of the Health – General Article specifies that statutory provisions regarding the use of medical cannabis do not authorize any individual to engage in (and do not prevent the imposition of any civil, criminal, or other penalties for) any of the following: (1) undertaking any task under the influence of cannabis when doing so would constitute negligence or professional malpractice; (2) operating, navigating, or being in actual physical control of any motor vehicle, aircraft, or boat while under the influence of cannabis; (3) smoking cannabis in any public place or in a motor vehicle; or (4) smoking cannabis on certain private property that is subject to specified policies prohibiting the smoking of cannabis on the property (including policies adopted by the governing body of a condominium or homeowners association). Vaporizing cannabis is specifically exempted from the provision related to use on private property.

Common Ownership Communities

For more information on condominiums and cooperatives (commonly known as common ownership communities, along with homeowners associations), see the **Appendix – Common Ownership Communities**.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 1295 of 2022.

Designated Cross File: SB 817 (Senator A. Washington) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Office of the Attorney General (Consumer Protection Division); Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

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km/jkb

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Appendix – Common Ownership Communities

When a person purchases a single-family home, condominium, or an interest in a cooperative housing corporation, he or she may also be required to join an association of owners, which is intended to act in the common interests of all the homeowners, condominium unit owners, or cooperative owners in the community. Collectively, these associations are often referred to as common ownership communities (COCs). In Maryland, a growing number of newly constructed or newly converted residences are located in some form of a COC.

The affairs of a condominium are governed by a council of unit owners, which comprises all unit owners. Among other powers, the council of unit owners has the power to impose assessments on the unit owners to pay common expenses. A council of unit owners may delegate its powers to a board of directors, officers, or a managing agent. Condominiums are governed under Title 11 of the Real Property Article.

Many new housing developments are subject to a homeowners association (HOA) that is created by a governing document and has the authority to impose mandatory fees on lots in the development in connection with the provision of services or for the benefit of the lots, the lot owners, or the common areas. HOAs are governed under Title 11B of the Real Property Article.

A cooperative housing corporation or “cooperative” is a corporation that owns real property. A resident of a cooperative does not own his or her unit; rather, the person owns an interest in the corporation, which leases the unit to the person for residential use. Cooperatives are governed by the laws in Title 5, Subtitle 6B of the Corporations and Associations Article.

Condominiums and HOAs may be authorized by their governing documents to impose liens on units or lots to collect unpaid assessments or fees. In a cooperative, the governing documents usually provide for the collection of delinquent fees, and evictions for unpaid fees are generally pursued by way of a landlord-tenant action.

Since registration of the various COCs is not required statewide, the exact number of COCs in Maryland is unknown. However, public offering statements for condominium regimes are required by law to be registered with the Secretary of State (SOS). SOS registration records show that, as of December 2022, 2,788 condominium regimes have been registered with the State. The State Department of Assessments and Taxation, which maintains assessment records based on class of property, reports that there are more than 227,000 condominium units in the State as of July 2022. The Foundation for Community

Association Research estimated that there were 6,910 community associations with an estimated 1 million residents in these associations in the State in 2021, the most recent information available.

Task Force on Common Ownership Communities

With a growing number of Marylanders residing in COCs, and evidence that some COCs had issues with governance, dispute resolution, and financial stability, the General Assembly created the Task Force on Common Ownership Communities in 2005 (Chapter 469 of 2005). The issues addressed by the task force included the education and training needs of COC boards and prospective buyers, availability of alternative dispute resolution services, special considerations of aging COCs, collection of assessments, and resale of homes within COCs. The task force met 10 times, held five public hearings, and submitted its final report in December 2006. The report's findings and recommendations have served, in subsequent years, as the basis for numerous pieces of legislation intended to improve the operation of COCs. For example, legislation enacted from 2007 through 2022:

- authorized a group of three or more unit or lot owners in a condominium or HOA to petition a circuit court to appoint a receiver in specified situations frequently found in aging communities (Chapter 321 of 2007);
- gave the Consumer Protection Division within the Office of the Attorney General increased authority over violations of the Maryland Homeowners Association Act (Chapter 593 of 2007);
- eased restrictions on the ability of condominiums and HOAs to amend their governing documents (Chapters 144 and 145 of 2008 and Chapter 480 of 2017);
- strengthened the transition process from developer to the governing body of a condominium or HOA by allowing the governing body to terminate specified contracts and requiring the developer to provide specified documents (Chapters 95 and 96 of 2009);
- required the governing body of a COC to purchase fidelity insurance or a fidelity bond covering various acts of malfeasance by COC officers, directors, and other specified employees and agents (Chapters 77 and 78 of 2009 and Chapter 615 of 2010);
- granted priority to a specified portion of a lien of a condominium or HOA over the claim of a holder of a first mortgage or first deed of trust in the event of a foreclosure on a unit or lot (Chapter 387 of 2011);
- limited the amount of damages for which the governing body of a condominium or HOA may foreclose on a lien against a unit owner or lot owner (Chapters 448 and 449 of 2013);

- expanded the purposes for which a condominium’s board of directors may hold a closed meeting, similar to the law for an HOA, by allowing a meeting to be closed to consider terms or conditions of a business transaction in the negotiation stage if disclosure could adversely affect the economic interests of the council of unit owners (Chapter 110 of 2013);
- established meeting standards and standards for late charges for delinquent payments, eviction restrictions, an auditing process for books and records, and a dispute settlement mechanism for cooperatives under specified circumstances (Chapter 567 of 2014);
- altered the contents of a required disclosure for the resale of a condominium unit, authorized the assessment of specified fees by a condominium council of unit owners or an HOA for providing specified information, and required the Department of Housing and Community Development to adjust the maximum authorized fees every two years (Chapter 735 of 2016 and Chapter 817 of 2017);
- increased to \$10,000 the maximum amount of the council of unit owners’ property insurance deductible for which a specific unit owner is responsible if the cause of any damage to or destruction of the common elements or units of a condominium originates from an event inside that owner’s unit (Chapters 56 and 57 of 2020); and
- established that specified COCs in the State must conduct a reserve study satisfying specified requirements every five years to determine the amount and necessity of reserves for anticipated capital replacements, repairs, and improvements. COCs must also adequately fund the recommended reserves, as specified (Chapter 138 of 2020; Chapter 433 of 2021; and Chapter 664 of 2022).

The task force’s report also featured findings and recommendations relating to the creation of an ombudsman in local governments. Since the report’s release, Prince George’s County created its Common Ownership Communities Program in 2007 with the stated purpose of assisting governing bodies, as well as owners and residents of HOAs, residential condominiums, and cooperative housing corporations, with education, training, and alternative dispute resolution. Charles and Montgomery counties have offices dedicated to COCs that predate the task force.