

## LETTER: Smokers' rights not above those of others

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**Dear editor:**

I am a renter in North Vancouver (East 12th Street, three-storey rental building) and am frustrated by the amount of second-hand smoke coming into my unit from other units and balconies.

North Van bylaws permit smoking in "dwelling(s) unit occupied as a private residence," yet ban it in other places where the smoke might get into the open window of a business or other building type.

It baffles me as to why my home – the place where I live, eat, and sleep – is allowed to be filled with cigarette smoke by others, but nothing else is. My neighbour is mere feet away. These are not private dwellings – apartment-style living is all too public. Their cigarette smoke regularly fills my apartment, right through the open windows that are protected elsewhere.

The Government of Canada recommends that smokers "smoke outside, away from open windows and air intakes," yet this does not apply to my apartment, and so my curtains smell like cigarettes from the neighbours. My blinds are filthy with bits of cigarette ash. My bedroom sometimes gets fogged in by cigarette smoke, and the damage my smoking neighbours can do to my health with their habits is well documented and widely known.

Yet, it is the "rights" of the smoker that are protected, not mine as a non-smoker who would really prefer to not breathe in "over 4,000 chemicals, at least 70 (of which) can cause cancer" (according to information on the Government of Canada website).

Given that smoking will always be legal and cigarettes always available for people to poison themselves with, I would like to see some new bylaws put in place.

Smokers ought to be required to smoke outside, away from other dwellings. Building owners should have to build a shelter for smokers to use, with proper receptacles for disposing of cigarette ends in order to avoid littering.

Asking smokers to quit is not the answer (as many of them won't or can't), but it is, I believe, reasonable to require them to smoke in a place where they do not negatively affect the people around them, and to ensure the place where they smoke still allows some measure of shelter and cleanliness.

**Renee McTavish**  
**North Vancouver**

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