

# Healthy housing: It's good for everyone.

As a property owner, you can take steps to create healthy homes that are:

- Affordable
- Comfortable
- Safe
- Free of asthma triggers
- Lead-free and smoke-free

You can do this by making sure your properties meet these key standards:

## 1. Proper ventilation that meets industry standards

- Air out pollutants with exhaust systems and windows. "Exhaust systems" are the fans in bathrooms and above the stove, for example.
- Fix exhaust systems that aren't working and windows that can't open.

Resource:

Go to <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/insidest.html> to learn more about steps you can take to improve the air indoors.

## 2. Homes that are free of carpeting, smoke, and pests

- Replace old carpets with smooth surface flooring, such as linoleum, tiles, and hardwood.
- Make your property smoke-free by asking people to smoke outside. Smoking inside is dangerous because smoke stays inside and lingers, which can increase maintenance costs.
- Repair window screens, water leaks, cracks, and holes to keep bugs and rodents from getting in. Use sticky traps and other baits instead of more expensive spraying pesticides. Pesticides can be toxic and can make asthma worse.

Resources:

Call 617-622-7566 or visit [www.smokefreeforme.org](http://www.smokefreeforme.org) to get information about smoke-free housing.

Call the Asthma Prevention and Control Program at 617-534-5966.

Visit [http://www.bphc.org/bphc/pdfs/asthma\\_ipm\\_guide.pdf](http://www.bphc.org/bphc/pdfs/asthma_ipm_guide.pdf) for an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guide.

## 3. Good, quality construction and renovation to prevent mold

- Make sure contractors use best practices recommended by the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition (BUAC).
- Repair water leaks and wipe down wet surfaces, like sweaty walls.
- Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and dehumidifiers to control moisture.



Boston Urban Asthma Coalition

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THE BOSTON URBAN ASTHMA COALITION AT 617.279.2271

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Resource:

Call 617-451-0049 and ask to speak with someone from the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition or see the building guidelines at: [www.buac.org/healthy-homes-guidelines](http://www.buac.org/healthy-homes-guidelines).

## 4. Lead testing and de-leading of homes built before 1978

- Get a free lead inspection if you think your property has lead paint. If you or a tenant has a child under seven or someone is pregnant, call the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program below for information.
- The following are also recommended:
  - Wash children's toys with warm water and soap. Wipe windows and doors with warm water and paper towels.
  - Never touch lead paint. If you see flaking or chipping paint, get it checked by calling the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
  - Get children's blood levels checked. See your child's doctor or call the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Resource:

Call the Boston Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 617-534-5966 or visit [www.bphc.org/leadpoisoning](http://www.bphc.org/leadpoisoning).

Call Lead Safe Boston for financial assistance with de-leading at 617-635-0190.

## 5. Injury prevention and fire prevention standards

- Fix fire and carbon monoxide alarms that aren't working.
- Make sure there are window guards above the first floor in every apartment with children.
- Properly vent and fix any heating appliance, stove, and chimney that isn't working to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure your property has good lighting in stairwells and fire exits that light up.

Resource: Call the Childhood Injury Prevention Program at 617-534-5197 or visit [www.bphc.org/childinjuryprevention](http://www.bphc.org/childinjuryprevention) for Matching Buy, which gives matching funds to landlords to install window guards. The program also offers training for parents in home safety and injury prevention.

Call the Boston Building Materials Coop at 617-442-2262 to get low cost window guards (for Boston residents).



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