

## **HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) INSPECTIONS**

Before the PHA can make payments to you on behalf of a tenant family, the unit must meet HUD's minimum Housing Quality Standards (HQS). These standards have been implemented by HUD nationwide to ensure that all assisted units meet minimum health and safety standards. The booklet "A Good Place to Live" describes the general aspects of a unit that must be inspected for compliance with HUD.

### **1. Prepare the Unit for Inspection:**

Review the information on Housing Quality Standards as you evaluate your rental unit. Try to correct any HQS violations before the inspection. At the time of the inspection the unit should be "move-in" ready. This will prevent delays in the beginning of the family's rental assistance. If the family is already in the unit, it is a good idea to go over the checklist with them to ensure the unit will meet the minimum requirements.

### **2. Make Repairs Promptly:**

If the housing unit does not pass the initial inspection, you will be notified in writing of any "Fail" items and given a reasonable time period to make the repairs. When the repairs are complete, the PHA will re-inspect the unit. The PHA is not responsible for any payments until the unit passes inspection and the family has taken occupancy. If the family moves into the unit prior to this, the family is responsible for the full amount of the monthly rent.



### **3. Areas Inspected:**

There are eight areas that must be reviewed for HQS compliance:

- Living Room
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Other Rooms Used for Living

- Secondary Rooms (not used for living)
- Building Exterior
- Heating and Plumbing
- General Health and Safety

**Ratings:**

- ✓ There are three ratings for the conditions verified by the Inspector: Pass, Inconclusive and Fail
- ✓ Pass means the condition meets the minimum requirement.
- ✓ Inconclusive means that more information is needed for the inspector to make a determination. For example, if the electricity and gas are not in service on the date of inspection, the inspector will mark “inconclusive” until service is turned on and verified.
- ✓ An item marked “Fail” on the inspection report means that the condition does not meet the minimum requirement and must be brought up to the standards prior to the tenant receiving rental assistance in the unit.

All fail items must be corrected and verified prior to the execution of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract.

**4. HQS Checklist:**

The following is a listing of the conditions that must be verified by the Housing Inspector:

**Living Room**

- Is there a living room?
- Are there at least two working outlets or one working outlet and one working light fixture?
- Is the room free from electrical hazards?
- Are all windows and doors that are accessible from the outside lockable?
- Is there at least one window, and are all windows free of signs of severe deterioration or missing or broken-out panes?

- Are the walls, ceilings and floors in good condition and free from hazardous defects?
- Are painted surfaces free of defective paint? For dwelling units constructed before 1978, if there is a child under 6 with an elevated blood lead level, the intact and non-intact paint on protruding chewable surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground and readily accessible to children must be lead-free or adequately treated.

### **Kitchen**

- Is there a kitchen?
- Are there at least one working outlet and one working, permanently installed light fixture?
- Is the kitchen free from electrical hazards?



- Are the windows and doors that are accessible from the outside lockable?
- Are all windows free of signs of deterioration or missing or broken-out panes?
- Are the walls, ceilings and floors in good condition and free from hazardous defects?
- Is there a refrigerator that works and maintains a temperature low enough so that food does not spoil over a reasonable period of time?
- Is there a kitchen sink that works with hot and cold running water?



- Is there space to store, prepare, and serve food?
- Are painted surfaces free of defective paint? For dwelling units constructed before 1978, if there is a child under 6 with an elevated blood lead level, the intact and non-intact paint on protruding chewable surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground and readily accessible to children must be lead-free or adequately treated.
- Are there a working oven, and a stove (or range) with top burners that work? If no oven and stove (or range) are present, is there a microwave oven and, if microwave is owner-supplied, do other tenants have microwaves instead of an oven and stove (or range)?

**Bathroom:**

- Is there a bathroom?
- Is there at least one permanently installed light fixture?
- Is the bathroom free from electrical hazards?
- Are all windows and doors that are accessible from the outside lockable?
- Are all windows free of signs of deterioration or missing or broken-out panes?
- Are the walls, ceilings and floors in good condition and free from hazardous defects?
- Is there a working toilet in the unit for the exclusive private use of the tenant?
- Is there a working, permanently installed washbasin with hot and cold running water in the unit?
- Is there a working tub or shower with hot and cold running water in the unit?
- Are painted surfaces free of defective paint? For dwelling units constructed before 1978, if there is a child under 6 with an elevated blood lead level, the intact and non-intact paint on protruding chewable surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground and readily accessible to children must be lead-free or adequately treated.
- Are there operable windows or a working vent system?

### **Other Rooms Used for Living and Halls**

- If used as a bedroom, are there at least two working outlets or one working outlet and one working, permanently installed light fixture? If not used as a room for sleeping, is there a means of illumination?
- Is the room free from electrical hazards?
- Are all windows and doors that are accessible from the outside lockable?
- If used as a bedroom is there at least one window? Are all windows free of signs of severe deterioration or missing or broken-out panes?
- Are walls, ceilings and floors in good condition and free from hazardous defects?
- Are painted surfaces free of defective paint or adequately treated? For dwelling units constructed before 1978, if there is a child under 6 with an elevated blood lead level, the intact and non-intact paint on protruding chewable surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground and readily accessible to children must be lead-free or adequately treated.
- Is there a working smoke detector on each level? Do the smoke detectors meet the requirements of Fire Administration Authorization Act of 1992?
- In units occupied by the hearing impaired, is there an alarm system connected to the smoke detector?

### **All Secondary Rooms**

**(Rooms not used for living, such as a laundry room)**

- Are all windows and doors that are accessible from the outside lockable?
- Are all these rooms free from electrical hazards?

### **Building Exterior**

- Is the foundation sound and free from hazards?
- Are all the exterior stairs, rails, and porches sound and free from hazards?
- Are the roof, gutters, and downspouts sound and free from hazards?

- Are exterior surfaces sound and free from hazards?
- Is the chimney sound and free from hazards?
- If the building was built prior to 1978 (ex: doors, porches floors, porch ceilings, stairs, decks, window sills and railings), are painted surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground or floor and readily accessible to children free of defective paint? If there is a child under 6 with an elevated blood lead level, the intact and non-intact paint on protruding chewable surfaces which are up to 5 feet from the ground or floor and readily accessible to children must be lead-free or adequately treated.
- If the unit is a manufactured home, is it properly placed and tied down?

### **Heating and Plumbing**

- Is the heating equipment capable of providing adequate heat (either directly or indirectly) to all rooms used for living?
- Is the unit free from not vented fuel burning space heaters or any other types of unsafe heating conditions?
- Does the unit have adequate ventilation and cooling by means of windows that open or a working cooling system?
- Is the hot water heater located, equipped and installed in a safe manner?
- Is the unit served by an approved public or private sanitary water supply?
- Is plumbing free from major leaks or corrosion that causes serious and persistent levels of rust or contamination of the drinking water?
- Is plumbing connected to an approved public or private disposal system, and is it free from sewer back up?

### **General Health and Safety**

- Can the unit be entered without having to go through another unit?

- Is there an alternative fire exit from this building that is not blocked and meets local or state regulations as an acceptable exit?
- Is the unit free from rats or severe infestation by mice or vermin?
- Is the unit free from heavy accumulation of garbage or debris inside and outside?
- Are there adequate covered facilities for temporary storage and disposal of food wastes, and are they approvable by a local agency?
- Are interior stairs and common halls free from hazards to the occupant because of loose, broken, or missing steps on stairways; absent or insecure railings; inadequate lighting; or other hazards?
- Do all elevators have a current inspection certificate?
- Is the unit free from abnormally high levels of air pollution from vehicular exhaust? Are the site and immediate neighborhood free from conditions, which would seriously and continuously endanger the health or safety of the residents?

#### **Other Requirements**

- Are tenant-supplied utilities separately metered?

#### **Most Common Fail Conditions:**

- Non-functional smoke detectors
- Missing or cracked electrical outlet cover plates
- Railings not present where required
- Peeling exterior and interior paint
- Tripping hazards caused by permanently installed floor coverings (carpets/vinyl)
- Cracked or broken windowpanes
- Inoperable burners on stoves or inoperable range hoods

- Missing burner control knobs
- Inoperative bathroom fan/no ventilation
- Leaking faucets or plumbing
- No temperature/pressure relief valve on water heaters.