

HQS INSPECTION STANDARDS

All rental units subsidized under the Section 8 program must be inspected and meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and applicable state and local standards. HQS are specific physical standards established by HUD to ensure that Section 8 apartments start off and remain decent, safe and sanitary. The following summary is intended to help landlords prepare units for inspections, and does not cover every aspect of the applicable standards.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- The unit must include a living room, kitchen, bathroom and one living/sleeping room for every two family members regardless of age.
- Ceilings and walls must be in good condition, with no large cracks, holes, peeling or chipping paint or loose plaster.
- Floors must be in good condition. The floor covering must not be curling or have loose edges or holes.
- Windows, including sills, frames and sashes must be in good operating condition and must open and close. There can be no broken, cracked or missing windowpanes. Windows must have permanently attached and adequate locks. Window guards are also required in windows in public hallways.
- All rooms must have either two working outlets or one working outlet and an overhead light or light fixture. All outlets, switches and electrical boxes must have covers with no exposed or fraying wires. All electrical splices must be properly contained in junction boxes with covers.

BUILDING INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

- The apartment number must be the same number that was registered by the landlord and posted on the front entrance door.
- The building address must be clearly marked on the front entrance.
- The entrance door must have a working lock.
- The building must have working mailboxes.
- The building must be decent, safe, sanitary and free of roach or rodent infestation.
- All interior and exterior stairs and rails must be hazard free. Porches must be hazard free, also.
- The building must be free from high levels of air pollution caused from vehicular exhaust, sewer/fuel gas, dust and /or other pollutants.
- Exterior surfaces accessible to children 6 years old and under must be free of any cracked or loose peeling paint and adequately covered to prevent exposure to lead paint.
- There shall be no blocked fire exits from the building.
- Elevators must be working and have current inspection certificates.

KITCHEN

- All stove burners must work. If the stove is equipped with a pilot light, the pilot light must light the burners. The oven must work and its door must close tightly. All parts must be functional.
- The refrigerator door gasket must be attached to the door, forming a proper seal.
- The sink must have hot and cold running water and a drain with a trap. The sink must be properly hooked to a sewer line. Neither the faucet nor the sink can leak or drip.
- There must be adequate food preparation and storage areas, with adequate means to dispose of food wastes.

BATHROOM

- There must be a private flush toilet fastened tightly to the floor.
- The bathroom sink must meet the same criteria as the kitchen sink.
- There must be a bathtub or shower.
- There must be adequate ventilation either from an operable window or an exhaust fan or vent.
- There can be no rotten or weak areas in the floor, nor any water damage.

BEDROOMS

- Each bedroom must have at least one window and must open and be large enough to use as an emergency exit.
- There must be a door, which can be closed.
- Each bedroom must measure at least 80 square feet.

HEATING

- There must be a heating system capable of heating the unit to a comfortable temperature. Furnaces must be serviced every two years and tested at the initial inspection.

SITE HAZARDS

- There can be no hazards on the site, such as dilapidated structures, trash, debris, unlicensed vehicles, non-maintained vegetation or wild animals.

SMOKE DETECTORS

- Smoke detectors must work.
- There must be at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector in proper working condition on each floor of the rental unit.
- There must be an alarm system with lights in each bedroom occupied by a hearing-impaired person.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- A battery-operated or hard-wired carbon monoxide detector is required in every apartment.
- Installation should be within 15 feet of the primary entrance of each bedroom or room used for sleeping.

LEAD-BASED PAINT

- Units built before 1978 and occupied by any child 6 years old and under cannot have any substantial chipping or peeling paint, either on the interior or exterior. Any such conditions must be treated as potential lead-based hazards. In any other units, any substantial chipping or peeling paint (interior or exterior), must also be avoided but will not be treated as potential lead hazards.

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF FAILED INSPECTIONS

- Ceilings: - damaged/cracked-severe
 - buckling/bulging-severe
 - chipping/peeling/blistering-severe
- Windows: - one or more do not stay up
 - cracked/broken/missing-severe
- Floor tiles: - loose or missing
- Mouse droppings or roach infestation
- Walls: - damaged/cracked-severe
 - hole(s) in wall: large