

# COURTESY HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

## HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM

As a courtesy, this checklist is provided to give Landlords an idea of the types of items that will be checked during a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. It is not all inclusive.

Please note that utilities must be on in the unit for the inspection.

There are several types of inspections with different time lines for repair:

- **Emergency items** which endanger the tenant's health or safety must be corrected within **24 hours of notification**.
- Owners will be given no more than **ten (10) days** to correct fail items on a move-in (MI) inspection. Since there must be adequate scheduling time, an owner should call for a final re-inspection within 7-10 days of the initial fail. Owners will be allowed one re-inspection for repair work to be completed. A second re-inspection may be authorized only with supervisor approval. If the time period given by the inspector to correct the repairs has lapsed, and the owner has not contacted the HA to schedule a re-inspection, the Request For Tenancy Approval (RFTA) will be voided and the family must submit a new RFTA before their voucher expiration date.
- For annual and special inspections repairs for non-emergency items must be made, and the re-inspection pass, within **thirty days of the inspection fail date**. An extension beyond the thirty day period may be approved by a Supervisor or Principal Analyst upon written request from the owner, with verifiable documentation showing why an extension is needed, such as an invoice showing the item is on order and when the item will be available, a medical emergency, etc.
- Failure to repair or repairs done incorrectly or poorly will not pass a re-inspection.

### 1. PAINT

- Lead from paint, paint chips and dust is especially harmful to young children and pregnant women. Units built before 1978 with a child(ren) under 6 years of age, who resides OR is expected to reside in such housing, must have all interior and exterior paint surfaces free of cracking, chipping or peeling paint. Paint found to be defective over minimum levels set by HUD will require the owner to supply appropriate lead free certifications (see 24 CFR Part 35). Excessive Peeling, chipping or cracking paint in a unit that will not have a child under the age of 6 residing still requires correction.

### 2. UTILITIES

- Electricity and gas service **MUST BE ON (INCLUDING AT MOVE IN INSPECTIONS)**! However, for annual inspections, gas heater pilot lights need not be lit during the summer months or when outside temperature is at or above fifty degrees Fahrenheit and inside unit temperatures are at or above sixty degrees Fahrenheit.
- Tenants who allow their gas and/or electricity to be turned off for nonpayment may be terminated from the HCV Program.
- One utility meter may not serve two dwelling units unless the owner pays the utility.
- Payment of Water, Sewer and Trash may be paid by either the owner or the tenant and must be clearly defined in the lease and contract as well as on any RFTA.

- The utility responsibility cannot be changed during the first year of the HAP contract and can only be changed with a 60 days written notice and approved by the HA. A new lease and contract will be generated when the utility responsibility is changed.

### **\_\_3. SECURITY**

- All doors and windows, accessible from the outside (such as basement, 1st floor, garage, or fire escape), must have single cylinder deadbolt locks that work (LOCKS THAT REQUIRE A KEY FROM THE INTERIOR ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE, NO EXCEPTION!).
- Window security bars located in rooms used for sleeping must be equipped with a quick release system; require no special knowledge or skill to operate; and meet local code.
- ALL exterior doors (including doors from the garage to the living area) must be sound, have a door knob and a single-cylinder deadbolt lock. Existing non-solid core exterior doors that fail Housing Quality Standards must be replaced with solid core doors.
- Side garage doors must be reasonably sound and have a lock.

### **\_\_4. WATER HEATER**

- Water heaters must be accessible during the inspection or a copy of local inspection report with a current pass rating must be provided to the inspector at the time of the inspection. AT THIS TIME, EARTHQUAKE STRAPS ARE NOT REQUIRED BY HQS.
- Whether gas or electric, a water heater must have:
  - a. A TPR (temperature pressure release) valve.
  - b. A discharge pipe of galvanized steel; RIGID copper piping and fittings; or C-PVC (flexible or coiled copper tubing is permitted when tubing or water flow is not restricted. PVC is not allowed).
  - c. The discharge pipe shall extend from the valve downward to not less than 6 inches or more than 2 feet above the floor or ground OR extend to the exterior.
  - d. The discharge pipe must be the same size as the TPR valve (example  $\frac{3}{4}$ " ) AND no valve restriction or reducer coupling of any type should be installed between the TPR and the tank or in the discharge pipe.
- Gas water heater REQUIREMENTS:
  - a. No gas water heaters are allowed in bedrooms or other living areas unless properly enclosed, vented to code (with two screened openings of equal size) to supply combustion air, and the enclosure has a door or other means to adequately inspect the unit.
  - b. Gas water heater closet doors must be in reasonably good condition, with tight hinges, and vented with two screened openings of equal size.
  - c. Storage of any items in the gas heater closet is not allowed.
  - d. Do not install insulation blanket to the bottom of a gas water heater or allow it to sag, restricting the combustion air to the bottom of the heater, as this could result in an unsafe operating condition.
  - e. There must be a 6" clearance around the vent connector from combustible material.

- Gas water heater RECOMMENDED CORRECTIONS:

- a. Elevate water heaters 18" above the floor when located in a residential garage.
- Electric water heater REQUIREMENTS:
  - a. Water heater closet doors must be in reasonably good condition, with tight hinges.
  - b. Storage of items in the heater closet is not allowed unless the heater was designed and listed or approved for installation adjacent to combustible materials.

#### **\_\_5. SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:**

- Units must have at least one smoke detector (battery or hardwire) on each level, including basements. None are required in an unfinished attic. They must be operational and installed correctly as follows:
  - a. On wall - placed 4" to 12" from ceiling
  - b. On ceiling - placed more than 4" from wall
  - c. Do not place in kitchen or near bathroom
  - d. Place in hallway adjacent to bedroom(s)
  - e. A basement, attic, or garage converted to a bedroom must also have a smoke detector.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors are outside each sleeping room, and at least one on every level of the unit.

#### **\_\_6. CEILINGS AND WALLS**

- Exterior walls must be weather tight.
- Interior walls must be in reasonably good condition;
  - a. no cracks wider than ¼ inch;
  - b. doorknob holes will be rated "Notable" on the Inspection Summary
  - c. holes 4 inches across or more will be rated as a "Fail" item.
- Painted walls and ceilings shall be reasonably clean and free from mildew and fungus.

#### **\_\_7. WINDOWS**

- Windows must be weather tight. No large cracks or broken or missing glass (this includes double pane windows). Small corner cracks may be corrected with silicone.
- A bedroom must have at least one operable window.
- A large piece of furniture (headboard, dresser, bunk beds, etc.) which covers the ONLY operable bedroom window will fail an HQS inspection. Emergency escape must be provided.

#### **\_\_8. DOORS**

- Knobs should be operational and all sliding doors must be on track.
- All closet doors (if provided) must work properly or be removed.
- Exterior doors (including the door from the garage to the living area):

- a. must be weather tight: NO drafts or gaps;
- b. must be sound, have a door knob, and a single cylinder deadbolt lock;
- c. HOLLOW CORE EXTERIOR doors in deteriorating condition shall be replaced with a SOLID CORE exterior door.

- Bathrooms require a door and door knob.
- At this time, bedrooms do not require a door or door knob but if present must be in reasonably sound condition.
- All door jambs must be in reasonably sound condition. Any that have cracks through the striker plates will result in a fail status (security hazard).

## **\_\_9. FLOORS AND CARPETS**

Must be free of any tripping hazards, torn areas, bad seams or exposed tack strips; NO ceramic tiles with sharp edges; NO soft areas around a toilet. Living areas must have a standard floor and covering; bare or painted concrete is not acceptable. POOR REPAIRS WILL NOT BE RATED "PASS": e.g. torn seams repaired with tape.

## **\_\_10. PLUMBING**

Check ALL pipes, sinks, tubs and toilets for leaks or stoppages. Toilet(s) must flush properly and be stable: NO ROCKING or shifting.

## **\_\_11. ELECTRICAL**

Minimum HQS requirements are:

- Kitchens require at least one working outlet and one working ceiling or wall light, permanently installed.
- Bathrooms require one permanently installed light fixture in working condition. An outlet cannot be a substitute for a permanent light fixture. Any existing or newly installed GFC electrical outlet must work as designed.
- Bedrooms (and most other rooms) require either two working outlets OR one working outlet and one working light fixture, permanently installed.
- All outlets and light switches MUST have a cover plate and must be free of cracks or chips.
- All electrical hazards must be eliminated, including but not limited to: exposed/broken/frayed wiring, extension cords which run under rugs or other floor coverings, loose or improper connections to outlets, improper splicing of wires, a light fixture hanging from an electric wire or cord without other firm support or fixture, short in light switch, exposed fuse box connections, and/or broken cord plug, etc.

## **\_\_12. SPACE HEAT**

A wood stove or portable electric heater as the primary source of heat in a unit is not acceptable. NO unvented fuel-burning space heaters! A heating facility must be capable of maintaining a room temperature of 70 degrees at a point 3 feet above the floor in all habitable rooms, directly or indirectly.

- Furnace filters must be clean at the time of inspection.

- For annual inspections, gas wall heater pilot lights need not be lit during the summer months or when outside temperature is at or above fifty degrees Fahrenheit and inside unit temperatures are at or above sixty degrees.

### **\_\_13. APPLIANCES**

Must be in good working order with no missing parts such as knobs, drip pans, oven handles, or fridge/oven shelves.

- All stove burners and the oven must work. Any gas oven or burner, which requires a match to light due to soil, grease, or need of repair, will not pass. The stove cook top, range hood filter, venting system and areas surrounding the oven shall be clean and free from grease and must not have any exposed wires or sharp parts.
- A microwave oven may be substituted for an owner-supplied oven and stove or range when the tenant agrees, and are furnished instead of an oven to both subsidized and unsubsidized tenants in the building or premises.
- A refrigerator does not require a kick plate at the bottom.
- Any owner-supplied appliance in the unit at initial inspection shall be maintained in proper working order throughout the first year of the lease. At subsequent inspections, any appliances not in proper working order (and not required by HQS) can remain in the unit provided they do not impose a health or safety hazard. In such instances, they will not be rated "Fail", however, the contract rent may be adjusted accordingly. Examples of appliances not required by HQS are air conditioners, dishwashers, and garbage disposals. NOTE: a dishwasher must have a bottom panel to pass an HQS inspection, and be free of standing water.

### **\_\_14. EXHAUST/VENTING**

- Bathroom(s) must have either an operable window or an exhaust fan to clear moisture and/or possible gas/sewer fumes.
- Kitchens do not require an exhaust fan or openable window, however if present must be working with no missing or exposed parts.
- No gas water heaters are allowed in bedrooms or other living areas (ex: kitchens) unless properly enclosed, vented to code, and with a door or other means to adequately inspect the unit.

### **\_\_15. FIREPLACE**

Opening must have a screen or appropriate glass covering. It may be provided by the owner or tenant.

### **\_\_16. BATHROOM(S)**

- There must be at least one bathroom present in the dwelling unit for the exclusive use of the occupant with a working toilet, sink, and tub or shower.
- A shower requires either a shower door or curtain. Sliding shower doors require a guide at the bottom to prevent swinging.
- All worn and cracked toilet seats and tank lids must be replaced and the toilet tank lid must fit properly. Cutting hazards would result in a fail rating.

## **\_\_17. BEDROOM(S)**

- Bedrooms in basements, attics and garages are not allowed unless they meet local code requirements; have adequate ventilation, emergency exit capability, and a smoke detector.
- Rooms used as sleeping areas (den, living room, family room, dining room, etc.) will not be counted as a bedroom for purposes of higher contract rent. (The listed number of bedrooms on tax records/recorded data will be used to determine number of bedrooms at move in for purposes of determining contract rent.) When there is a discrepancy the HQS inspector will make the determination at the inspection.
- Permanent built-in closets are not required by HQS. Free standing closets may substitute built-in closets if no hazard is posed. If a closet is present, a clothes pole must be provided by the owner.
- At this time, a bedroom door is not required by HQS. If present it must be in reasonably sound condition.
- A bedroom must have a floor area of not less than 70 square feet.

## **\_\_18. YARD MAINTENANCE**

Yards shall not be allowed to become dry and overgrown and grass may not exceed a maximum of 12 inches. The ground shall be free of any hazardous debris. NOTE: The HA recommends that the owner and tenant enter into a written agreement regarding yard maintenance.

## **\_\_19. PESTS**

The unit must be free from infestation of roaches or other vermin. The owner is responsible correcting the infestation. However, if such infestation(s) are repeated, it may be considered a lease violation and the owner may evict. The Housing Agency may terminate the family's housing assistance on that basis.

## **\_\_20. PET(S)**

If pets are allowed, tenants must have written permission from the owner. Dogs or any animal that may cause injury to inspectors **MUST BE SECURED** or **PROPERLY LEASHED** during inspections. Excessive amounts of animal urine or feces in the unit or yard will result in a tenant-responsible fail item.

## **\_\_21. GARBAGE OR DEBRIS**

Whether inside or outside, **MUST BE REMOVED!**

## **\_\_22. STORAGE**

A tenant may use the garage or shed to store personal effects unless the amount or type of material stored presents a health or safety hazard. A garage filled floor to ceiling with no egress available for emergencies will "Fail". Appropriate walkways (minimum 3 feet) for fire egress must be maintained and no doors may be blocked. Owners may **NOT** store work-related or personal belongings in the subsidized unit, garage, shed, or driveway. The tenant must have full access to all rooms of the dwelling unit.

## **\_\_23. VEHICLES**

- Inoperative (non-tagged or non-running) vehicles stored in the garage, on the premises, or in the parking area of the property MUST be removed if designated as blight to the neighborhood and/or presents a health or safety hazard.
- Hazardous conditions (ex: oil puddles or a pan of oil anywhere, a car on jacks, old batteries), will be rated a "fail".

## **\_\_24. POOLS, SPAS, AND HOT TUBS**

When a pool, spa, or hot tub is present, the owner and tenant MUST provide a written agreement for the maintenance of such to the HA.

- An empty pool is hazardous. It must be filled with water or back-filled with dirt. • The water shall be kept clean at all times.
- If present, ladders, decks, and diving boards shall be stable and in reasonably good condition. •At this time, no additional fence around the pool is required by HQS.

## **\_\_25. MOBILE HOMES**

- All HQS requirements that apply to rental housing apply to manufactured homes/spaces.
- Mobile homes must be placed on the site in a stable manner and be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage. Mobile homes must be securely anchored by a tie down device which distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors so as to resist wind overturning and sliding.
- Utility pedestals (water, sewer and electric hook-ups/connections) must be accessible at all times to facilitate any needed repairs or emergencies.

## **\_\_26. EXTERIOR**

- The roof must be in reasonably good condition with no leaks.
- Gutters and downspouts (if present) should be sound and free from hazards.
- Concrete driveways, sidewalks, and patios should not have cracks wider than one inch or deeper than one inch. Uneven surfaces are a tripping hazard.
- Fences (if present) must not have any hazardous conditions. For instance: fence severely leaning, broken supports, or missing boards which allow entrance of intruders. Gates must be in reasonably good condition, must not drag, and must lock.
- House/Apartment Number: House number(s) MUST be CLEARLY VISIBLE from the street. An apartment number/letter must be mounted on or near the front door. Numbers/letters which are too small, same color as the unit, covered by bushes, etc. will not pass.
- Crawl and vent screens shall be secure and intact.
- Lighting: All public hallways, stairs and exit ways must have adequate lighting at all times.
- Stairways: Handrails are required on sections of four or more steps (ex: 3 steps and the step you take to the porch). Handrails and stairs must be secure.
- A balcony or porch, 30 inches or more above the ground, requires railing around it.

**\_\_27. ACCESS TO UNIT**

Tenant must have direct access to his/her own unit. Units which can only be accessed by passing through another dwelling unit will not pass an HQS inspection.

**\_\_28. MODIFICATIONS TO UNIT**

ALL modifications or adaptations to a unit, including those due to a disability, must meet all applicable Housing Quality Standards. Additions or conversions will not increase the approvable bedroom size or contract rent without appropriate documentation approved, completed by local building codes.

**\_\_29. SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS**

The site and immediate neighborhood must be free from conditions which would seriously or continuously endanger the tenant's health and safety as determined by the PHA and/or local government agencies.