

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are minimum property standards that have been approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for all federally assisted properties. CMHA is required to enforce these federal property standards to ensure that all Voucher assisted properties are decent, safe and sanitary. Most of the HQS standards are similar to local building codes.

A unit must pass the initial HQS inspection **before** CMHA can make a subsidy payment to a landlord. One fail item causes a unit to fail the HQS inspection. Thereafter, an inspection must be conducted annually.

CMHA's goal is to apply these property standards in a fair and consistent manner because we believe that all Voucher participants are entitled to live in decent and safe housing. Enforcing HQS regulations for Voucher assisted properties is a high priority.

Landlords and Housing Choice Voucher residents have dual responsibilities for complying with HQS regulations. Tenants must not damage their unit and must maintain tenant-paid utilities. Landlords are required to make immediate repairs if HQS violations are cited. A 30-day deadline for repairs is usually given for all non-life threatening violations. Extensions for repairs may be given if the scope of repair work requires additional time for completion. For emergency repairs, a 24-hour deadline is given. The same deadlines also apply for tenant-caused violations. If tenant-caused HQS damages (including utility shut-offs) are not remedied by the deadline, the tenant may be denied further participation in the Voucher Program.

CMHA Section 8 staff are committed to work with landlords and their tenants to ensure that all Voucher assisted properties meet Housing Quality Standards.

Thanks for working with us!

Thomas F. Dobies, Director
Section 8 Programs Department



SECTION 8 PROGRAMS STAFF

LANDLORD TIPS

Check out our website for important information about the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Screen your tenant carefully. CMHA certifies that the family is eligible for the Program. We do not guarantee the suitability of the tenant. Use a thorough application.

Don't ask the inspector to make a list of repairs in order to comply with HQS regulations. Your unit should be ready for immediate occupancy.

Get a copy of a sample inspection report and use it as a guide for checking your unit for fail items.

Do a unit move-in inspection with your tenant to document the move-in condition of the unit.

Create "house rules" for all your tenants and follow them.

After your unit is in contract, inspect the unit quarterly.

If a tenant owes rent, collect it monthly.

Do not allow the tenant to have boarders or lodgers. The housing assistance contract lists all approved family members. Your lease should also list all family members.

No side payments for extra rent! This is fraud and may subject you to civil and criminal penalties and end your participation in the Housing Voucher Program.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) AND INSPECTION TIPS



OUR MISSION...

CMHA serves the community by helping people access affordable housing. By working with our collaborative partners, we develop, renovate and maintain housing, promote neighborhood revitalization and assist residents in accessing needed social services.

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**Visit CMHA on the web at
www.cmhanet.com**

Proudly serving over 10,000 Franklin County families!

APPLIANCES

STOVE

- Top burners should be present and working.
- An oven must be present and working.
- Door handles must not be detached or missing.
- Check for hazardous gas hook up evidenced by strong gas smell.
- Check electrical connections for any defects or hazardous features, exposed wires, damaged cords, or broken or cracked covers.

REFRIGERATOR

- Is the refrigerator adequate in size relative to the needs of the family?
- Does the refrigerator have any parts which are missing or deteriorated, such as handled broken, seals damaged, seriously cracked linings, missing kick plates where sharp edges or wires are exposed?
- Does the refrigerator maintain a temperature low enough to keep food from spoiling over a reasonable period of time?

SINKS, SHOWERS, TUBS, ETC.

- They must be connected to a system that will deliver hot and cold running water.
- They must be connected to a drain with a "gas trap".
- Repair connectors (or vents or traps) which are faulty to the extent that severe leakage of water or escape of sewer gasses is occurring.
- Clean clogged drains.
- Repair the faucet, knobs, or handles that are stripped or missing.
- Does the tub, sink or shower need recaulking?
- Check for other defects, broken toilet seats, and seriously cracked or damaged surfaces.
- The bathroom must have an window that can be opened or a working exhaust fan.

CMHA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY!

UTILITIES

- All utilities must be on for HOS Inspections (including gas, water, electric, and/or fuel services)
- In units where the tenant must pay for utilities, each unit must have separate metering services for measuring actual usages for utilities.

EXTERIOR CONDITIONS

Lead Paint - Landlords will be required to remove defective paint using lead safe work practices. Make sure in all cases that the unit has no visually defective paint surfaces. If defective paint surfaces are present, repair and repaint all surfaces with 2 coats of non-lead paint or otherwise suitable cover. These surfaces include all paint on frames, trim, banisters, railings, porches, overhangs, gutters, garages, window wells, casings, ledges, floors, decks, stairs, etc., on the entire building. Defective paint surfaces cannot exceed:

Exterior Standards:

- Not greater than 20 square feet or
- Not more than 10 percent of a building component.

Interior Standards:

- Not greater than 2 square feet or
- Not more than 10 percent of a building component.

Handrails - Generally four or more steps must have a secure handrail along the full length of the steps.

Check for -

- Missing or insecure railings.
- Make sure to install railings around a porch or balcony which is approximately 30 inches or more above the ground.
- Foundations, stairs, rails, gutters, roof, porches, landings, and walkways are sound and free from hazards and deterioration.
- Side walks must be free from tripping hazards.
- Check chimneys for blockage, and other unsound condition such as loose bricks and/or mortar and be structurally sound.
- Exterior surfaces that allow air, water infiltration (not weather tight), substantial drafts, vermin or any other conditions, which will cause deterioration of the structure.

- Private access to the unit must be provided.
- Look for significant entry of ground water evidenced by flooding in the basement.
- Gutters and down spouts must be in good condition.

ELECTRICITY

- Each room must have at least one working outlet and one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture or each room must have at least two working outlets.
- A missing or cracked cover plate presents an electrical hazard.
- A loose outlet is an electrical hazard.
- A damaged outlet presents an electrical hazard.
- Electrical cords under rugs or through door ways are potential fire hazards.
- Fixtures must be securely mounted to a junction box and not mounted on a surface in a manner which allows it to be abused.
- A smoking or sparking outlet must be corrected immediately.
- A non-working outlet is a fail item.
- A lamp cord is inadequate to be part of the permanent wiring system. Improper or loose wire connections present an electrical hazard.

• Check for overloaded circuits evidenced by frequently "blown" fuses or disengaged breakers.

- Exposed fuses or breaker box connections are electrical hazards.
- Also check for missing knock-out plates.

CEILINGS & WALLS

Check for -

- Holes
- Sagging
- Unkeyed plaster
- Structure or hazardous features which expose the tenant to the danger of structural collapse.

- Defects which allow drafts, rats, mice, etc., to enter the house.
- Are defective paint surfaces present? See lead-base paint standards.

SECURITY

DOORS— (must be weather tight and secure)

- Door lock must be present and securely fastened to the door.
- Lock striker plate must work and be securely fastened to the door frame.
- A chain lock alone is not considered adequate.
- A simple "bolt" lock is not adequate as the only lock on the door.
- Check for conditions that will not hold the door and lock secure.
- Check the condition of door frames, jambs and thresholds.

WINDOWS

- The nailing shut of a window must not close the only other means of egress and must not seriously decrease air circulation.
- Locks must be present and in good repair.
- Look for severe deterioration, or broken or missing windows, which may allow significant drafts.
- Windows must be operable and remain open without props.
- Units will be required to have screens in every window that is designed to be operable. The screens must be removable for egress in case of an emergency.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- All units must have at least an operable smoke detector on each level (installed according to package instructions.)
- Unit must have an acceptable alternate means of egress from the building in case of a fire. Windows are O.K.
- An exit that is blocked makes it unusable as an exit.

HEATING & PLUMBING

HEATING AND VENTILATION

- Check for adequate heat (at least 68 ° F).
- Hazards of fire or escaping exhaust gases from the heating system. Check for a blocked flue.
- No kerosene or unvented space heaters.
- Gas leak or fumes are to be considered of an emergency nature and must be corrected immediately.
- Chimney clean out cap should be properly fitted, free of deterioration, accessible for inspection and the chimney must be free of debris.
- Adequate ventilation and cooling by means of operable windows or a working cooling system.
- Does heating equipment expose the tenant to abnormally high levels of harmful gasses or other noxious pollutants?
- The water heater must be equipped with both a temperature-pressure relief valve and discharge line down to approximately 4" - 6" from the floor.
- Are there combustible items stored adjacent to the water heater?
- Is the water heater corroded and leaking water on the floor?

PLUMBING

- Plumbing must be connected to an approvable public or private sewer system.
- Does the present water supply provide the tenant with adequate, clean water?
- Serious and persistent levels of rust or contamination in the drinking water indicate corroded pipes.
- Sewer back-up is considered an emergency repair and must be corrected immediately.
- Is the toilet attached securely to the floor?
- Are there any plumbing leaks present?

FLOORS

Are floors free from tripping hazards, structural hazards, or any other hazardous features, including ingress of vermin?