



HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS



Housing Quality Standards (HQS) play an important role in the administration of the Section 8 Housing Assistance Program. The Housing Quality Standard Inspection is required before assistance can be appropriated. The basic purpose of the inspection is to insure that the unit meets all the minimum inspection standards set by HUD. If the unit fails the initial inspection, all failed items must be corrected and the unit must pass a reinspection by the Housing Inspector prior to the subsidy being paid on the unit.

Units sometimes fail housing inspections because owners and tenants are not familiar with HQS requirements and/or have not assessed the condition of the unit prior to the scheduled inspection. For these reasons the Housing Authority encourages owners and tenants to conduct pre-inspections prior to the scheduled inspection. Using a checklist like the one listed on the reverse page is helpful in identifying potential deficiencies and to facilitate needed repairs. By having the items corrected before the inspection, the inspector has a better chance of passing the unit the first time. This will save valuable time and ensure an accurate initial and subsequent annual inspection.

The Housing Authority is also required to inspect the unit at least once annually after it is initially set up. The unit must pass this inspection prior to the annual review date of the contract in order to continue to receive the Section 8 Assistance. In most cases, if the unit fails the inspection, the Housing Authority will allow the owner three (3) to thirty (30) days to make the repairs. However, if the failed item is considered to be life threatening, the time allowed will be much shorter. The owner and tenant will be sent written notice of the date of reinspection. Additional time may be granted in cases where extensive repairs are needed on a case by case basis.

While it is generally the owner's responsibility to maintain the condition of the assisted unit in accordance with the regulations governing the Section 8 Housing Programs, the owner may hold the tenant responsible for tenant caused damage. The owner may require the tenant to repair or pay for those items which are tenant caused. If the owner chooses to have the tenant repair the damages, the owner must notify the tenant explaining which items they are responsible for, with a copy provided to the Housing Authority. If the tenant fails to repair the items that are tenant caused within the time frame indicated, the tenant's Housing Assistance may be terminated.

Rent abatement, or the withholding of Housing Assistance Payments, applies when the Housing Authority verifies that the repairs have not been completed to meet minimum HQS requirements within the time period given. On those rare occasions when the owner does not complete the repairs, the Housing Authority's portion of the Contract Rent will be abated and withheld. Housing Assistance Payments will resume, and will be prorated, from the date that the unit passes the third and final housing inspection. The tenant cannot be held responsible for the abated Housing Assistance Payment.

If the unit remains under abatement and repairs are not completed, the Housing Authority will notify the tenant and the owner that the Section 8 Housing Assistance Contract will be terminated and no further assistance will be paid on this unit. The tenant can stay and pay the full rent, or move, provided proper notice has been given.

Landlords who wish to list their rentals with the Everett Housing Authority can call (425) 258-9222 or fax us at (425) 303-1122.

The Most Common Deficiencies Resulting in a Failed Inspection

ENTRY DOORS: Must lock securely. Check the weather stripping; if there are gaps that let air in, weather stripping must be applied. Check the doorjamb and strike plate for defects.

WINDOWS: Those designed to open must open and must have a permanent lock attached. (sticks and thumbscrews are not accepted as locking devices). The windowpanes must not be broken or cracked.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS: HUD requires that a unit must be free of any possible electrical hazards. All electrical outlets and switches must have cover plates that are not cracked and they must be secured to the wall. Also, there can be no exposed wiring in the home and all light fixtures must be properly mounted to the wall or ceiling and must be working. Breaker boxes must have all open spaces filled with knock outs or blank spacers and must not have any exposed wires.

OVEN/RANGE: Clean the range and oven to ensure that it would not be a fire hazard. Burners must lay flat and elements must be working properly. Be sure all knobs and dials are on the appliance. Please insure filter screen is installed in front of the fan.

REFRIGERATOR: Check the rubber gasket around the doors. If it's loose or cracked, it needs to be replaced. Also check the kick-plate to be sure it is secured at the bottom of the refrigerator.

HEATING AND PLUMBING: The heating system must be on, working properly, and provide adequate heat. Be sure all heat sources are clear of furniture, bedding, clothing, and other items. Oil, gas and propane furnaces must be professionally serviced at least every two years. Verification of service must be provided and the furnace must be safe and working properly. Check for any leaks in the plumbing fixtures: sinks, toilets and showers and repair if necessary.

HOT WATER HEATERS: Must have a pressure relief valve and discharge line that extends to within 12 inches of the floor. Discharge tubing must be of the appropriate type of material, either galvanized steel or copper or CPVC piping (DO NOT USE PVC). There should be no exposed wires. In addition, flammable materials should not be stored near the hot water tank.

FLOORING: Carpets that are frayed or torn, or vinyl, tile or linoleum that would be a tripping hazard must be repaired. Exposed carpet tacks or thresholds that are loose must be repaired. Please check and repair floors that have dry rot. Dry rot is commonly found in the bathroom, around the bathtub and toilet.

INOPERABLE SMOKE DETECTORS: A smoke detector must be on each floor of the dwelling unit and must have a tester button. Units occupied by a hearing impaired person must be equipped with a smoke alarm designed for the hearing impaired, mounted in the bedroom occupied by the hearing impaired individual.

VENTILATION: Inoperable bathroom fans or no ventilation - i.e. window would result in a fail rating.

DECKS, RAILINGS, STEPS: HUD requires that all stairways with 4 or more steps must have a handrail. The handrail must run the length of the stairway and be securely supported in order to provide adequate safety for the user. Decks, rails and steps must also be free of dry rot and tripping hazards. Railings are required for decks, porches, or steps that are over 30 inches from the ground.

CHIPPING PAINT: HUD requires that a home built prior to 1978 must have minimal chipping or peeling paint on the inside or outside of the unit, or anywhere on the property if the unit is occupied by children under the age of six.