

Inspection Handbook

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher Program

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection Handbook was created by the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Division of the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) in order to clarify and amend inspection procedures included in the Administrative Plan and (HQS) regulations set forth by HUD. The following by no means encompass the entirety of the inspections process or items that are considered below the standards acceptable for program participation.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

The Housing Choice Voucher Program, HQS Division strongly encourages all Property Owners to inspect their units **prior** to an inspection. By conducting these inspections, a Property Owner will be aware of items that may need to be repaired, and also allows the Property Owner to maintain some basic upkeep that all properties require.

GUIDELINES & TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

Annual Inspections

1. **Failed Annual Inspections**
 - a. Fail items must be corrected within 30 days from the date of the failed inspection.
 - b. The HQS Division will determine the date and time of the re-inspection(s), and notify the Property Owner and tenant via mail. This mailing will also include a list of fail items that need to be repaired.
 - c. If the fail items are not corrected at the time of the 1st reinspection, the unit will go into abatement, (a non-refundable reduction of the HAP payment for each day a unit does not meet HQS after the 1st reinspection.) A postcard will also be sent to the Property Owner, stating that the unit has gone into abatement. To reduce the length of an abatement:
 - i. The Property Owner can call the HQS department **once the repairs have been made.**
 - ii. An inspector will be sent to the unit within five days to verify that the repairs have been made.
 - iii. It is the Property Owner's responsibility to ensure the Inspectors access to the unit.
 - d. If the fail items are still not repaired at the time of the 2nd reinspection, the unit will stay under abatement and go into final fail status. This

means that the contract will be terminated after a 30-day notice, and the tenant will be issued a voucher to move.

- e. If repairs are completed before the effective termination date, the termination **may** be rescinded if the Property Owner makes the repairs and tenant chooses to remain in the unit. **Only one** inspection will be conducted after the termination notice is issued.
2. Extensions – Extensions may be granted when **all** of the following criteria are met:
 - a. When an inspection requires a major upgrade or repair (exp, roof, siding, windows, etc.)
 - b. Written documentation dated a minimum of 24 hours prior to the inspection detailing repairs or upgrades that will be completed, as well as the estimated date of completion and cost.
 - c. Approval from the HQS supervisor.
3. Weather Deferment
 - a. A conditional pass will be granted on specific items for inspections conducted from October through April (exact dates to be specified by HQS supervisor.)
 - b. Items granted weather deferments must be completed by June (exact date to be specified by HQS supervisor.)
 - c. If all weather-deferred items are not completed and passed during the weather deferred inspection, the HAP contract will be abated beginning on the Weather Deferred inspection date.

Initial Inspections (These inspections will be conducted for vacant units being put onto the program.)

1. Inspections are only conducted after the receipt of the completed Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA.)
2. Initial inspections will be scheduled only when all of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The Property Owner has all the utilities on and appliances present when applicable, (tenant supplied utilities will need to be transferred after passed inspection, and on the contract date.)
 - b. The unit is cleaned and in move in condition
 - c. The unit is vacant, unless the tenant has chosen to turn in an RTA for the unit where they are currently residing.
 - d. The Property Owner has agreed to an up-front rental quote or has yet to respond to an offer after 24 hours. When schedulers call for initial inspection on a yet to respond Property Owner, they will make sure the up-front rent quote is agreed upon.
3. Failed items found during a move-in inspection must be corrected within 30 days of the fail date.
4. A maximum of two (2) re-inspections will be conducted in order to verify all repairs are completed.
5. The inspection must be passed within 45 day of the submission of the RTA.

- a. If an initial inspection does not comply with number 3-5 in this section, the client will be required to find another unit. RTA's that are submitted by the client for the same property will be declined.
6. If we are unable to gain access to the unit at the confirmed date and time, the unit will be considered a failed inspection.
7. No subsidy will be paid until the unit passes the initial inspection.

HQS Quality Control Inspections (These inspections are randomly selected monthly after a passed inspection.)

1. Quality control inspections will be preformed by the HQS Supervisor or an HQS Certified Designee.
 - a. The reinspected sample is to be randomly drawn from recently completed HQS inspections.
2. The purpose of Quality Control inspections is to:
 - a. Ascertain that each inspector is conducting accurate and complete inspections.
 - b. To ensure that there is consistency among inspectors in application of the HQS.

24 Hour Emergency Inspections

1. 24 Hour Inspections are conducted for any of the following reasons:
2. Life Threatening:

- a. Lack of Security for the unit
- b. Ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- c. Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- d. Natural gas leak or fumes*
- e. Electrical problems which could result in shock or fire
- f. Broken glass where someone could be injured
- g. Obstacle which prevents tenant's entrance or exit to unit
- h. Inoperable or missing smoke detector

*In those cases where there is leaking gas or potential of fire or other threat to public safety, and the responsible party cannot be notified or it is impossible to make the repair, proper authorities will be notified by the PHA

3. Non Life Threatening: may qualify for a 3 day extension based upon availability of parts and a written request for extension as stated in the Annual Inspection section under extensions.

- a. No heat when outside temperature is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and temperature inside the unit is below 60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- b. Utilities not in service
- c. No running hot water
- d. Lack of properly functioning toilet
- e. Inoperable Owner-owned air conditioner, for units that serve special population
- f. Inoperable gas stove burner

*** If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected within the time period required and the Property Owner is responsible, the unit will go into abatement and the unit will be terminated after a 30-day notice.

*** If the emergency repair item(s) are not corrected within the time period required and the tenant is responsible, the tenant will be terminated from the program.

Special/Complaint Inspections

Special/Complaint Inspections are conducted based on requests from tenants, Property Owners, neighbors or public officials.

a. HCVP Request for Special Inspection form must be completed by the tenant and landlord for each request. Requests from neighbors or Public Official will be accepted via a phone call.

b. AMHA may accept photo's of completed repairs as evidence of completion if submitted to HCVP Inspection Department before the scheduled Special Inspection date.

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

The following are amendments, clarifications or additions to the HQS manual. These items by no means encompass the entirety of the inspections process and fail items.

Whole House Risk Assessments – (are administered in accordance with the Ohio EPA's lead safe practices, which supersedes HUD's regulations on lead.)

Property Owners, not tenants need to prepare for Lead Testing.

1. Definitions
 - a. Defective Paint
 - i. Flaking, peeling, worn, cracking or chalking paint or clear finish including varnish.
 - b. Above deminimis
 - i. Large interior surfaces (example: walls or ceilings) Two square feet or more of defective paint on surface
 - ii. Small interior surfaces (example: windowsill) 10% or above of defective paint on surface
 - iii. Exterior surfaces: 20 square feet or over 10% of a component of defective paint on surface
 - c. Below deminimis
 - i. Large interior surfaces (example: walls or ceilings) Less than two square feet of defective paint on surface
 - ii. Small interior surfaces (example: windowsill) Less than 10% of defective paint on surface
 - iii. Exterior surfaces: Less than 20 square feet or under 10% of component of defective paint on surface.
2. What triggers a risk assessment?

- a. Units with children under the age of 6, a pregnant tenant, or children under 6 who are the unit for more than 6 hours per week.
- b. Units built prior to 1978.
- c. Defective paint above the de minimus levels.

3. Testing procedures

The landlord will be responsible to have a full-house lead risk examination, which meets the requirements of the Ohio Law and the HUD Lead Safe Housing Rule, performed by a Licensed Risk Assessor, for interior repairs that disturb more than 2 square feet of a painted surface in any interior room or 10% of a minor area. Exterior repairs that disturbs more than 20 square feet of a painted surface require a risk examination that must include at least one dust sample from an exterior living space such as a porch.

Provide HCVP Inspections with the following documents:

- a. A copy of the Renovation Report which includes:
 1. The Lead Paint Owner's Certification
 2. A copy of the Certified Renovator's Certificate
 3. A copy of the signed Pre-Renovation Education Form confirming receipt of the lead hazard information packet.
- b. A clearance report completed by an Ohio Licensed Risk Assessor, or Clearance Technician.

Failure to return the required forms before the scheduled re-inspection date will result in the unit going into abatement until the forms are received and the re-inspection is completed.

4. Interior and Exterior Defective Paint

- a. Units with defective paint regardless of de minimus status, must be treated in accordance with work safe practices, and repainted with two coats of unleaded paint/varnish. See EPA lead law (40 CFR Part 745)
 - i. Interior defective paint in secondary rooms not used for everyday living may be approved at the inspector's discretion, only if there are no risk indicators present and the defective paint is below deminimis. The inspector would make this a pass with comment.
 - ii. Exterior defective paint can be approved at the inspector's discretion, only if there are no risk indicators present, and the defective paint is below deminimis. The inspector would make this a pass with comment.
- b. All paint chips must be removed from the unit.

Electricity

1. Outlets must be GFCI protected (within 3 ft. of a drain,) and be able to trip manually or with a tester, in any bathroom, kitchen or basement (if applicable).

2. Overhead and exterior light fixtures must have a globe where designed to have a globe.
3. All outlets must have proper wiring.
 - a. To test a two-pronged, ungrounded outlet, plug an appliance into the outlet and verify it turns on.
 - b. A three-prong outlet must meet one of the following three standards:
 - i. The outlet is properly grounded.
 - ii. A GFCI protects the three-pronged ungrounded outlet.
 - iii. The outlet complies with the applicable state or local building or inspection code.
 - c. A GFCI must work as designed in order for the inspector to consider the GFCI in proper operating condition.
4. All missing circuit panels and knockouts in/on the fuse/breaker box must be covered.
5. All outlets and light must work as designed.
6. All missing or cracked switch/outlet covers must be replaced.
7. Non-metallic surface wiring (such as Romex,) must be secured, and not be placed in/on an area that may cause it to be cut or tampered with.

Safety and Security – Doors, Windows, Walls, Floors, Ceilings, Stairs and Smoke Detectors

1. Doors
 - a. Exterior doors must be weather-tight, lockable, open and close freely, be in good repair (no holes, no defective paint etc,) have all trim intact, and have a threshold or threshold type component.
 - b. All doors leading to the exterior must have locks which do not require the use of a key to exit.
 - c. Interior doors must be present on all bedrooms and bathrooms, open and close freely, are in good repair, fit properly, and must not have exterior locks which may restrict exit from any room.
 - d. All applicable hardware for doors must work as designed (knobs, hinges, etc.)
 - e. Storm doors must operate as designed, including closers and screens/glass windows.
 - f. Storms door may be repaired, replaced or removed.
2. Windows
 - a. Every bedroom must have at least one window, and open if designed to open.
 - b. All operable windows that are within 6 feet from the ground, or could otherwise be accessed from the ground, must have sturdy working locks.
 - c. All windows must be weather-tight, properly glazed, free from cracking, flaking, peeling, chipping and loose paint/varnish.

- d. All operable windows must stay up when opened.
3. Walls
- a. Must be free from cracking, flaking, peeling, chipping and loose paint/varnish.
 - b. Walls with sagging, severely cracked or otherwise damaged, plaster/drywall, must be repaired or replaced, and painted with 2 coats of unleaded paint.
 - c. Holes in walls, fist-size or larger will be required to be fixed.
 - d. Door stops are not required, however when installed properly, the use of door stops will help prevent wall damage.
4. Floors
- a. All wood floors, interior and exterior, must be sanded to a smooth surface and properly sealed.
 - b. Any loose or warped boards must be secured and made level.
 - c. Carpets must be sanitary, and not present a trip hazard (torn, separated seams, wrinkles, cut, etc.)
 - d. Basement floors must be in good repair and free of hazards.
5. Ceilings/Ceiling Tiles
- a. Must be free from holes.
 - b. Must be strong, sturdy and in their permanent position
 - c. Must be free from cracking, flaking, peeling, chipping and loose paint/varnish.
 - d. If water damage is found, we will fail the ceiling, and require that the leak be fixed and the ceiling is repaired or replaced.
6. Stairs
- a. All steps (interior and exterior) with a minimum of 3 or more risers must have a handrail.
 - b. All risers must be the same height.
 - c. All stair treads must be strong, sturdy, the same height and width on each step.
 - d. All balusters and spindles, which may cause a falling hazard, must be in place on a staircase.
7. Smoke Detectors
- a. Smoke Detectors are required on each floor of the unit, including basements and finished attics.
 - b. Smoke Detectors must be at least 3 ft from the kitchen and bathroom areas, and no further down than 12 inches from the ceiling, and no closer than 4 inches from the ceiling, (when placed on a wall.)
 - c. Basement Smoke Detectors must be placed on the bottom of a joist in a horizontal position and near the steps.

Kitchen and Bath

1. Kitchen

- a. Kitchens must have at least 1 working outlet and 1 overhead light.
- b. Windows are not required in kitchens.
- c. Appliances (including sink) must be in good working order. There must not be evidence of gas or water leakage.
- d. Both the stove and range must all work as designed. All burners must be operable, all handles and knobs must be present (with degrees visible.)
- e. Refrigerators must operate as designed, with no missing parts, and must maintain low temperatures.

2. Bathroom

- a. Bathrooms must have a door, an electric exhaust ventilation fan/gravity flow vent pipe or operable window (to allow ventilation,) one permanently installed light fixture, a sink, tub/shower, and toilet.
- b. Toilet seats must be replaced if there are cracks and/or the finish is worn through to the substrate.
- c. Fixtures located in the bathroom must operate as designed (exp. Towel racks, medicine cabinets, shower doors, etc.)
- d. Sinks must not be clogged, leaking, and are required to have gas traps.
- e. Toilets must not be clogged, loose from the wall or floor, flush properly and have tank lids that fit.

Heating

1. Heating

- a. Heating equipment must provide heat at a minimum of 70 degrees when it is below 40 degrees outside.
- b. Every room used for living, requires a direct heat source. Furnaces require;
 - i. A gas flue with an uninterrupted positive/upward flow.
 - ii. A sediment trap in the gas line for gas furnaces/boilers.
- c. Flue pipes must be vented and sealed properly.
- d. Electric baseboard heaters must have a cover and work properly.
- e. Unvented fuel burning heaters are not acceptable.

2. Water Heaters

- a. Gas-
 - i. All gas water heaters require a shut off valve, and dirt leg on the gas line, shut off valve on the cold water line, a PRV/discharge line within 6 inches of the floor.
 - ii. The flue must be properly vented and sealed, and be sloping in a positive/upward flow
- b. Electric –

- i. All electric water heaters require a shut off valve on the cold water line, a pressure release valve (PRV), and a discharge valve within 6 inches of the floor.

Building Exterior

1. Guardrails are required on porches that are more than 30 inches above the ground.
2. Street numbers must be clearly visible from the street
3. The yard must be free from debris, garbage and glass.
4. All porches/decks must be free from broken, rotten and missing boards.
5. Buckling or sagging gutters, in danger of falling must be repaired, removed, or replaced.
6. Roofs must be structurally sound and weather-tight.
7. Driveways and walkways must be in good repair.
8. Garages must be structurally sound, and free of defects.

General Health and Safety

1. Severe infestations, (bugs or rodents,) must be corrected by the Property Owner.
2. All equipment, (garbage disposals, storm doors, ceiling fans, etc.) must operate as designed. They can be repaired, replaced or removed.
3. Substandard repairs will fail inspection.
4. All incinerators must be removed, have their flues sealed and gas lines tapped.
5. Other potential hazards not previously included in this handbook, that an Inspector may encounter, will fail.