

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS) OVERVIEW

The Housing Quality Standards inspection system was created by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development for the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program. HQS is not a building code; it is HUD's standard for determining which units are safe, decent and sanitary places for participants in the voucher program to live. Support Coordinators can help individuals make sure individuals' units remain in compliance with HQS by doing a quick visual inspection during their face-to-face visits in individuals' homes. If there are maintenance or repair issues that would result in the unit failing the HQS requirements below, support coordinators can help individuals report these issues to property management directly, or inform in-home service providers about the issues and have them teach the individual how to request maintenance and repairs through property management.

- **HQS Inspection Process:**

- Four types of inspections: Initial, Annual, Special (when there is a complaint) and Quality Control.
- Voucher staff will schedule the HQS inspection with the owner or owner's representative.
- The initial inspection will be triggered by the "Request for Tenancy Approval" (RTA).
- Owner will be notified of the results of the inspection. Voucher staff will also be notified.
- Owner shall have 30 days to correct items.
- Re-inspections will be scheduled only after all failed items have been corrected.
- The unit MUST pass HQS inspection prior to move-in.

- **HQS Requirements:**

- All utilities (gas, electricity, and water) must be connected and operable at the time of inspection.
- All areas of the unit must be accessible to the inspector, including outbuildings and garages.
- Owner or owner's representative must be present on initial inspections. Adult member of household or owner must be present on annual inspections.
 - Components of HQS:
 - ✓ General Health & Safety
 - Free of evidence of infestation
 - No evidence of chipping, peeling or otherwise deteriorated paint in homes built before 1978
 - Working smoke detectors on each floor
 - Walls, ceilings, and floors in good condition
 - Doors and windows lock properly
 - ✓ Heating and plumbing
 - Cooling/heating equipment is present and operable or the home has adequate windows for ventilation
 - Water heater is properly installed
 - Plumbing is free of leaks or corrosion
 - Toilets, sinks and tubs operate correctly
 - ✓ Electrical System
 - All switch plate and outlet covers are intact

- All lighting fixtures are operational
 - All outlets are functional
 - No exposed, frayed or broken wires
 - ✓ Exterior Conditions
 - Foundation appears sound
 - Any stairway with three or more consecutive stairs has a secure railing
 - Roofs, gutters and siding appear to be in good condition
 - Yards must be free of excessive debris
 - ✓ Kitchen and Bath
 - All appliances present must be in working condition
 - Appliances are not required, but if present must be fully operational
 - Bathrooms must have an operable fan or window that opens for ventilation
 - ✓ Walls, Ceilings and Floors
 - Free of bulging, buckling, cracks or large holes
 - Floors must be steady and free of trip hazards (e.g., loose or frayed carpet)
 - No loose or missing parts such as ceiling or floor tiles
 - Free of drafts or exposure to the elements
- **Most Common Failed Items:**
 - Missing electrical outlet covers
 - Leaks under sinks
 - Exposed wires
 - Mold
 - Faulty appliances
 - Trip hazards
 - Debris in yards