



April 6, 2005

Dear Landlord/Owner:

The Inspections Division of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, in order to clarify and amend specific sections of the Housing Quality Standards (HQS), has created the attached “Inspection Handbook”. As indicated in the introduction the items by no means encompass the entirety of the inspections process or items that are considered below standards acceptable for program participation.

Amendments to the Housing Quality Standards will be effective for inspections conducted on or after April 15th 2005. The following are notable amendments in the “Inspection Handbook”:

- Interior doors must be present on all bedrooms. Doors must close securely and fit properly in door frame.
- Outlets must be GFCI protected (within 3 ft. of a drain) in any bathroom or kitchen.
- Floors in kitchens and bathrooms must have some type of base shoe, trim or sealing. A vinyl base shoe is acceptable.
- Street numbers must be clearly visible from the street
- Repaired exterior defective paint should be consistent with existing areas (does not effect weather deferred painting for June 2005)

It is the goal of the Inspections Division to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing for our clients and to provide consistent and accurate inspections. The “Inspection Handbook” is an integral resource to assist the Inspections Division in providing the best customer service to both landlords and clients. If you have any questions concerning the “Inspection Handbook” please feel free to contact Tressie Choate the HQS Customer Service Representative at 330-376-7026.

Sincerely,

Kristin Houk
HQS Inspections Supervisor

Inspection Handbook

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher Program

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

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

GUIDELINES & TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

Annual Inspections

1. Non-Emergency Fail Items
 - a) Non-emergency fail items must be corrected within 30 days from the date of the failed inspection.
 - b) The PHA will determine the exact day corrections must be made.
 - c) The landlord and tenant will be notified through the mail of the specific date and time of the re-inspection. (8:00-12:00 or 12:00-4:00)
2. Extensions — Extensions may be granted when **all** of the following criteria are met:
 - a) when an inspection requires a major upgrade or repair
 - b) written documentation dated before the inspection detailing repairs or upgrades that will be completed and the estimated date of completion
 - c) approval from HQS supervisor
3. Weather Deferment
 - a) a conditional pass will be granted on defective exterior paint for inspections conducted from mid-October through mid-May (exact dates to be specified by HQS supervisor).
 - b) items granted weather deferments must be completed by mid-June (exact date to be specified by HQS supervisor).

- c) if all weather-deferred items are not completed and approved during the weather deferred inspection, the HAP contract will be abated

Initial Inspections

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) owner must have all utilities on (tenant supplied utilities to be transferred on 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
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.

Clearance Tests

1. Definitions
 - a) defective paint
 - flaking, peeling, worn, cracking or chalking paint or clear finish including varnish
 - b.) above de minimus
 - large interior surfaces (example: walls or ceilings): Two square feet or more of defective paint on surface
 - small interior surfaces (example: windowsill) 10% or above of defective paint on surface
 - exterior surfaces: 20 square feet or over 10% of a component of defective paint on surface
 - c) below de minimus
 - large interior surfaces (example: walls or ceilings): Less than two square feet of defective paint on surface
 - small interior surfaces (example: windowsill) Less than 10% of defective paint on surface

- exterior surfaces: Less than 20 square feet or under 10% of a component of defective paint on surface
2. Indicators — all of the following criteria must be met in order to require a clearance test.
 - a) defective paint above de minimus
 - b) a child under (6) at the time of the 1st inspection, or a pregnant occupant
 - c) unit built prior to 1978
 3. Testing procedures
 - a) the entire unit must be free of defective paint and paint chips before a clearance test can be taken
 - b) a minimum of eight(8) samples will be taken at the 1st Clearance Test:
 - two (2) samples will be taken from each of at least (4) rooms
 - window trough, sills, and floors can all be tested
 - c) failed items will be tested at the 2nd Clearance Test
 - it is at the discrepancy of the Risk Assessor to test other non-failed areas at a 2nd Clearance Test
 4. Cost
 - a) 1st Clearance Test
 - free- cost of 1st test is reimbursed to PHA by HUD
 - b) 2nd Clearance Test or any other Clearance Test taken within (1) year of the 1st Clearance Test
 - \$40-will automatically be taken out of the HAP payment

HQS Quality Control Inspections

1. Quality Control inspections will be performed by the **HQS Supervisor or an HQS Certified Designee** on the number of files required by the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP)
 - a) the reinspected sample is to be drawn from recently completed HQS inspections
 - b) the Supervisor/other qualified person can accompany the inspector on a sample of units under contract the same day or inspect recently passed units without the inspectors presence
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

Non-Compliance Procedures (NON-EMERGENCY ITEMS)

1. Abatement — (a non-refundable reduction of the HAP payment for each day a unit does not meet HQS after the 1st re-inspection)-To reduce abatement the following procedure can be followed:
 - a) the landlord calls when all repairs are completed
 - b) the PHA will reinspect the unit within (5) business days
 - c) it is the landlords' responsibility to ensure inspectors' access to the unit

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

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

General Health and Safety (All Rooms)

1. Walls
 - a) in areas where plaster or drywall is sagging, severely cracked or otherwise damaged, it must be repaired or replaced
2. Floors
 - a) all wood floors interior and exterior must be sanded to a smooth surface and sealed
 - b) any loose or warped boards must be re-secured and made level.
 - if boards cannot be leveled, they must be replaced
 - c) all interior floors must be in a finished state (no plywood)
3. Optional equipment - Example: garbage disposals, screen doors, dishwashers, air conditioners, ceiling fans, etc.
 - a) must operate as designed
 - b) no missing parts

- c) Non-operational or ill-maintained equipment must be repaired, replaced or removed
- d) proper ventilation is required on all dryers-and the responsibility and regulations are as follows:
 - landlord is responsible for the ductwork vent to exterior
 - tenant is responsible for the connection material from dryer to exterior vent
 - interior moisture collection boxes are not acceptable

4. Security

- a) no double cylinder deadbolt locks (or any lock which requires a key to exit) on exterior doors
- b) security bars or security screens
 - must be equipped with a quick release system if present on emergency exit window
 - landlord responsible for ensuring the family is instructed in using the quick release system
- c) exterior doors-the following is a list of required features that must be present
 - weather-tight to avoid air or water infiltration
 - lockable
 - be in good repair (no holes, no defective paint, de-lamination etc.)
 - all trim intact
 - have a threshold or threshold type component
- d) Interior doors must meet the following requirements
 - must be present on all bedrooms and
 - close securely
 - fit properly in door frame with no large gaps between door and door frame
 - Interior locks which may restrict exit from any room are not permitted

5. Electricity

- a) outlets must be GFCI protected (within 3 ft. of a drain) in any bathroom or kitchen

6. Unit Exits

a) 3rd floor bedrooms (original construction)-must have an alternate means of emergency exit: the following is a list of acceptable means of egress.

- Permanently installed ladder
- Roll-type ladder installed near an operable window
- A functional and openable window onto a porch or roof (4/12 pitch or less)

7. Defective paint

a) Interior defective paint, whether it is above or below de minimus, must be safely prepared and painted with two coats of unleaded paint or encapsulated with other suitable material with the following exceptions.

- defective paint in secondary rooms (i.e. basements, storage areas, laundry rooms and closets), not used for everyday living, may be approved at the inspectors discretion, only if **all** of the following criteria are met:
 - no clearance indicators are present
 - defective paint below de minimus (considered a pass with comment)

b) exterior defective paint must be safely prepared and painted with two coats of unleaded paint or encapsulated with other suitable material

- defective exterior paint can be approved at the inspectors discretion if all of the following criteria are met:
 - no clearance indicators are present
 - defective paint is below de minimus (will be considered a pass with comment)

Bathrooms

1. Toilet

a) toilet seats must be replaced if there are cracks and/or finish worn through to the substrate

2. Floor
 - a) must have some type of base shoe, trim or sealing for a finished look, vinyl base shoe is acceptable
 - b) floor type may be carpet. It is at the inspectors discretion to fail carpeting in this area due to sanitary condition and/or safety
3. Electricity
 - a) any outlet within 3 ft. of a drain in a bathroom must be GFCI protected

Kitchen

1. Floor
 - a) must have some type of base shoe, trim or sealing for a finished look, vinyl base shoe is acceptable
 - b) floor type may be carpet. It is at the inspectors discretion to fail carpeting in this area due to sanitary condition and/or safety
2. Electricity
 - a) any outlet within 3ft. of a drain in a kitchen must be GFCI protected

Heating and Plumbing

1. Adequacy of Heating Equipment
 - a) 70 degrees is the minimum temperature of acceptance (in the heaters area of operation) for a unit to be considered a healthy living environment
2. Water Heater— The following is a list of required items that must be present:
 - a) a properly installed and functioning temperature-pressure relief valve
 - b) a discharge line within 6” of the floor which is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ ” in diameter and is consistent in diameter from tank to floor
 - c) a sediment trap in the gas line for all gas powered water heaters
 - d) must have a shut-off valve for water flow
3. Furnace — the following is a list of required items that must be present:
 - a) any gas flue must have an uninterrupted positive/upward flow
 - b) a sediment trap in the gas line for all gas furnaces/boilers

Building Exterior

1. functional handrails are required on all steps, which have (4) rises or more
2. a guardrail must be present on a porch that is more than 30" above ground
 - a) guardrails must be at least 36" tall
3. street numbers must be clearly visible from the street
4. repaired exterior defective paint should be consistent with existing areas