



Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Housing Quality Inspection Department

Working in conjunction with property owners, landlords, agents and tenants, the NRHA Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection department is honored to serve the citizens of Norfolk by providing inspection services to Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) – Section 8 participants and landlords.

The task of the HQS inspection department is to inspect housing units chosen by program participants, and to ensure they are deemed Decent, Safe and Sanitary before Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) are started.

The NRHA inspection department completes inspections on more than three thousand voucher units annually.

Inspections conducted by HQS inspectors are based on the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The HQS defines “standard housing” and establishes the minimum criteria necessary for the health and safety of program participants.

Types of inspections conducted are:

- **Initial (Pre-HAP)** - Inspections are conducted on vacant or occupied units. If the unit is occupied, the person holding the voucher must be the occupant.
- **Annual** – required each year by HUD in conjunction with tenant re-certification
- **Special or Complaint** – Requested by the landlord, tenant or public official.
- **Quality Assurance** – A HUD required sampling of all Initial and Annual inspections.

For Annual and Quality Assurance inspections, letters of notification are sent detailing the scheduled date and time. Dates and times for Initial and Complaint inspections are generally confirmed over the telephone in an effort to expedite the scheduling process.

The inspection office strives to work as closely as possible with landlords and tenants; sharing the necessary information to help all involved prepare for the inspection.

Our objective is to house the participant, not to critique the housing unit. NRHA Housing Quality inspectors are not at liberty to conduct or fail inspections based on personal views or biases. Inspectors are required to be HQS certified, and trained to use sound judgement to ensure units are Decent, Safe and Sanitary.

Though some regulations may be similar, HQS inspectors do not conduct Norfolk City building Code inspections.

The list below contains examples of items most commonly identified during inspections. Although this list is not all inclusive, and does not include all standards, checking these areas will help prepare units for inspection:

1. Smoke detectors
 - a. Not working
 - b. Dis-connected
2. Electrical outlets and switches
 - a. Improper wiring
 - b. Loose on wall or broken
 - c. Broken or missing cover plates
 - d. G.F.I. not testing properly
3. Plumbing and Heating
 - a. Leaky faucets
 - b. Toilets constantly running or loose on the floor
 - c. Water heaters missing discharge pipes and cover plates
 - d. Power cords (Romex) not installed in proper conduit on water heaters and HVAC units.
4. Windows
 - a. Not working properly
 - b. Not staying up when raised
 - c. Not opening/closing or locking properly
 - d. Weather tight seals
 - e. Cracking, chipping glazing and peeling paint
 - f. Missing screens
5. Doors
 - a. Loose on the hinge
 - b. Not latching or locking properly
 - c. Entry door not providing a weather tight seal
6. Stoves/ovens
 - a. Burners or elements not lighting or working properly

NOTE: You may have noticed that house keeping is not mentioned. Per HUD regulations, housekeeping is not a part of the HQS inspection, and is not identified unless the unit is found to be unsanitary.

In some instances there is a need for an owner or tenant to request a Special or Complaint inspection. The person generating the complaint should remain mindful to first contact the person responsible for addressing the concern, and give that person reasonable time to address the concern. Correspondence should be documented. If a request is warranted, please contact HCV case management. Case management will then forward the pertinent information to the inspection office and request an inspection on the unit if warranted.

The following is a list of items that would warrant a Special or Complaint inspection. Under the Code of Federal Regulations [24 CFR 982.404(a)] these items are considered of an emergency nature and must be corrected by the owner or tenant (whoever is responsible) within twenty-four (24) hours notice by the inspector:

- Lack of security for the unit
- Waterlogged ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- Major plumbing leak or flooding
- Natural gas leaks or fumes
- Electrical problems which could result in shock or fire
- Inadequate heat
- Utilities not in service
- No running hot water
- Broken glass where someone could be injured
- Obstacle which prevents tenant's entrance or exit
- Lack of functioning toilet
- Holes in sub flooring
- Excessive mold/mildew that may pose a health hazard

The Housing Quality Inspection supervisor may grant an extension (not more than 24 additional hours) whenever the responsible party cannot be notified or it is impossible to complete the repair within the 24 hour period.

Smoke Detectors

Each dwelling unit must include at least one battery-operated or hard wired smoke detector; in proper working condition on each level of the unit (this includes basements). If hearing- impaired persons occupy the unit, smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing- impaired persons in each room occupied by the hearing impaired.

The representative of the tenant or landlord present at the inspection will be informed that the smoke detector must be in working condition within 24 hours so as not to pose a health hazard. HQS inspectors will follow-up to verify the smoke detector is in compliance.

Tenants are encouraged to assist in the up-keep of the property. General maintenance and minor repairs by the tenant – with the owner's consent – will help to ensure a smooth and timely inspection. Tenants should keep the owner abreast of repair items and their cost so that they can be promptly addressed.

Lead Base Paint

Presently deteriorating paint in housing units built before 1978, that house, or may house a child under the age of six (6) is a major concern. Deteriorating paint and the dust it creates can produce an environment that is hazardous to humans, especially small children. Deteriorating paint on the interior and exterior surfaces of units must be repaired using safe work practices.

Debris from repairs should not be allowed to remain, and should not be left to be cleaned up by the tenant.

Mold and Mildew is another area that is becoming a concern. Mold can be a serious hazard, and will be identified during inspections if found to be excessive.

Information on lead base paint can be obtained at the NRHA HQS inspection office. Information on Mold/ Mildew and lead base paint can also be obtained online at www.epa.gov

Questions

The NRHA Housing Quality Inspection office looks forward to building our partnership, and enhancing our working relationship with property owners and the citizens of Norfolk.

Please forward questions concerning HQS inspection guidelines to

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Or

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