



HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

MOST COMMON FAILED ITEMS & PRE-INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Failed inspections require re-inspections and delay the initial contract process, including your first Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Please help expedite this process by reviewing the most common failed items list and using this pre-inspection checklist. Look your unit over carefully before the unit is scheduled for an initial HQS inspection. Repair or replace any items that violate Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

Listed below, you will find some of the most common reasons why a unit will fail an HQS inspection.

- Smoke Detector is inoperable or missing: Each unit must have a working smoke detector on each unit level, including basements.
- Door Seals: All entry and exit door seals must be in good repair and prevent air/heat from escaping. Refrigerator and freezer door seals must also be in good condition and allow doors to open and close adequately.
- Deteriorated paint: No chipping, cracking, or peeling paint inside or outside the unit.
- Stairs and steps: Missing handrail or porch railing. A handrail is required for four or more steps; a railing is required on the porch 30 inches or more above the ground.
- Windows: Broken/cracked panes. Bedrooms must have at least one window that can be opened. Windows designed to open must be openable.
- Security: Windows, accessible from the ground, that will not lock. Unit entry doors that are loose or locks that do not work.
- Electrical hazards: Broken, cracked, or missing electrical outlet and switch cover plates. Exposed fuse box/circuit breaker connections. Exposed electrical wires. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt (GFCI) outlets will not test and reset. Outlets near sinks/lavatories, not GFCI. Three-pronged outlets that are not properly grounded (open ground). Missing light globes/covers. At least two working outlets in bedrooms and living room.
- Stoves: Burners inoperable, knobs missing, oven element inoperable, drip pans missing.
- Bathrooms: No ventilation (must have an openable window or vent fan). Evidence of leaks. Toilet not securely fastened or won't flush. Clogged drains. Plumbing fixtures that are missing handles or equipment that does not work properly.
- Water heater: No temperature and pressure relief valve. No overflow pipe or pipe does not extend outside or within 18 inches of the floor. Water heater located near sink/lavatory, which is not enclosed (electrical hazard).
- Heating equipment: No unvented fuel-burning space heaters may be present in the unit. The unit must have adequate heat for the entire unit.



- Floors: No tripping hazards caused by damaged or cut-installed floor coverings.
- Surfaces: No observed mold/mildew inside or outside the unit.
- Other interior hazards: Health hazards are caused by insect infestation, unsanitary conditions, and overloaded circuits.
- Other exterior property: Sheds, detached garages, or other outside buildings must meet the same standards and not pose a health/safety risk to the occupants. Facia and soffit must not have rotted wood.
- Foundation: Open spaces or crawl spaces around the foundation need to be secured and closed off.

Here is a checklist to use **prior** to the inspection. This listing is not all-inclusive or considered to be a complete list of causes for HQS failure.

- The unit must be empty / vacant and be in move-in ready condition.
- All construction/rehabilitation (painting, carpet replacement, etc.) must be completed.
- Utilities (water, gas, electric) must be turned on including pilot lights.
- Where there are four or more consecutive steps (risers), handrails must be securely attached and run the length of the stairway. This applies to the interior and exterior of the ~~Walk~~ off, porches and decks 30 inches above grade must have guardrails.
- The primary heating system must be in working order and provide adequate heat to all rooms used for living and maintain an interior temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit between October 1 and May 1. If the source is gas, it must be vented to the outside. If the source is electric, it must be permanently installed and controlled by a separate thermostat. There must be no unvented, primary or supplemental heating system that burns gasoline, kerosene or oil.
- If window security bars or security screens are present on emergency exit windows, they must be equipped with a quick release system. The owner is responsible for ensuring that the family is instructed on the use of the quick release system.
- A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) must be installed in all kitchen and bathroom outlets within 6 feet of a water source. All GFCI receptacles must work.
- A smoke detector will be required in each sleeping area and outside each sleeping area on each level of the house/ apartment, including the basement. If any member of the family is hearing-impaired, a hearing-impaired smoke detector must be installed.
- Any units with Gas appliances or enclosed garages need to have a carbon monoxide detector installed.
- The range and oven should be clean and all burners must lay flat and burners/elements should be working properly. All knobs and dials should be present and indicate properly. Hood ventilation fan filter screen should be installed. Gas stoves, the oven and all burners must light from pilot.



- The refrigerator's rubber gasket around the door should be intact and fit snugly. Loose and/or cracked/deteriorated gaskets must be replaced. The kick-plate at the bottom of the refrigerator must be secured properly. Must be capable of cooling to sufficiently keep food from spoiling.
- All windows designed to open must open and have a permanent lock attached. The windowpanes must not be broken or cracked. Vertical windows must stay up and open without the use of props, must have a weather tight fit.
- All exterior entry doors must be lockable and must provide a weather tight fit. The doorjamb and striker plate need to be installed properly and doorframes need to be free from damage. Double-keyed locks are not allowed on either entry or storm doors.
- All sliding-glass doors must have a lock or security bar on the door that works.
- The unit must be free from infestation of roaches, mice, bed bugs or other vermin.
- HQS Inspector will not inspect a unit suspected of having a bed bug infestation.
- The water heater must be in proper working condition and properly vented (gas). A temperature-pressure relief valve must be in place with a discharge line that is discharged out an exterior wall or within 6 inches of the floor. Galvanized steel, copper or CPVC piping is allowed (not PVC). The water heater must be free from exposed wiring and electrical junction box cover properly secured.
- Units must be free of electrical hazards. All outlets and switches must have cover plates (in good condition), intact and secured to the wall. There can be no exposed wiring. All light fixtures (including exterior lights) must work and be properly mounted to the wall or ceiling with globes as designed. All spliced wires must be in an electrical junction box. Fuse boxes must not have over-fused circuits.
- All three-prong outlets must be grounded or replaced with a two-prong outlet. All outlets must be wired properly and free from damage and paint.
- All rooms used for living must have either two working electrical outlets or one electrical outlet and a permanently installed light fixture. All laundry and bathrooms shall have at least one electrical receptacle. The kitchen and bathroom must have a permanently installed over-head or wall mounted light fixture.
- Breaker boxes must have all open spaces filled with knockouts or blank spacers and must have no exposed wires.
- Dryer vents must be vented to the outside of the unit.
- The bathroom must have either an outside window that opens or an exhaust fan vented to the outside.
- The unit must have hot and cold running water to the kitchen and bathroom with adequate pressure. There should be no leaks from faucets or under/around sinks. Vanity sink stopper must be operable.
- All plumbing fixtures must have a sink trap (most common is a P-Trap) to prevent sewer gas from leaking into the unit.
- There must not be any clogged or slow drains.
- There must be a shower or bathtub that works with an operable stopper.
- There must be a flush toilet that works, is securely mounted to the floor and does not leak.
- There should be no peeling, cracking and scaling, chipping or loose paint inside or outside the unit including porches, decks, windows, fascia, soffit, eaves and fences.



- Units which do not have an adequate mechanical air-conditioning system shall have screens on all exterior windows and doors used or required for ventilation. Screens on windows and doors shall be properly fitted to the opening, properly stretched, and properly maintained, without rips, tears or other defects. All screen doors and storm doors shall be equipped with a self-closure device.
- All ceilings, walls and floors must be strong, sturdy and in their permanent positions.
- Floor coverings cannot be torn or have holes that can cause someone to trip (i.e., weak sub floors, raised edges, open seams or tears, exposed tack strips, loose or missing thresholds etc.).
- All interior ceilings and walls must be in reasonably good condition, free from holes and mildew.
- The flue pipe from any furnace or water heater must be sealed at the chimney and installed correctly.
- If the downspouts or gutters are damaged and/or missing they must be repaired. Gutters must be clear of debris.
- The unit and yard must be free of debris, garbage and construction supplies, inside and outside. Trees need to be in good condition and a reasonable distance away from rooflines, gutters and utility lines. Shrubs need to be cut back from all windows needed for emergency egress.
- Owners must supply “refuse disposals”; facilities include trashcans with covers or dumpsters with lids or doors.
- Every bedroom or sleeping room must have an operable window for emergency egress; if a window is designed to open, it must open.
- Mailbox must be undamaged and USPS approved.
- Yard must be mowed with no unregistered or inoperable vehicles.
- Detached garages and storage buildings must meet the same safety standards of the interior/exterior of the unit.
- The roof must not leak. Indications of a leak are discolorations or stains on the ceiling. The roof must be in good condition and installed properly.
- Site address must be clearly posted and visible from a passing vehicle including numbers/letters on multi-unit properties.
- Crawlspace or foundation covers must be permanently installed and in good condition.