



Serving elderly, disabled & low income citizens of
Bristol and Sullivan County, Tennessee
204 Bluff City Hwy. • Bristol, TN 37620-4215

Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

All Rental Units subsidized under the Section 8 HCV Program must meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

HQS is a program of requirements established by HUD to ensure that Government subsidized housing remains - - -

DECENT— SAFE — and — SANITARY

The following summary of Housing Quality Standards is intended to help owners prepare rental units for HQS inspections, and is not intended to cover every aspect of the HQS regulations.

General --- Requirements

Approved Units Must Include: Kitchen, Bathroom, *one* Living/Sleeping Room for every *two* family members. Various types of housing are acceptable, such as a single family home, apartments and mobile homes. Properties such as group homes with shared bathrooms are not acceptable.

Ceilings and Walls: Must be in good condition, with no large cracks, holes, or loose plaster. There can be no evidence of water stains which would indicate leaks.

Floors: Must be in sound condition with no weak or rotted areas. The floor covering must not be curling or have loose edges, holes, cracked or frayed areas that create a “tripping hazard”.

Windows: Including sills, frames, and sashes — — Must be in good operating condition and must open and close if designed to do so. Broken or cracked panes are only acceptable if they do not allow air into the unit or do not present a cutting hazard when touched. Windows are not acceptable if they have to be propped open to keep the sash up. All Windows accessible from ground level or other structures, such as fire escapes, must have a permanently attached locking mechanism that is in working condition.

Living Room: Must have a window — — It does not have to open. There can be no broken, cracked, or missing panes.

Sleeping Room(s): Must have at least one window and the window must open. Sleeping rooms must also have two electrical sources such as two wall outlets or one wall outlet and an overhead light.

Wiring: All outlets, switches, and electrical boxes must work & have covers with no exposed or fraying wires. All electrical splices must be properly contained in junction boxes with covers. Outlet & switch covers cannot be cracked or broken. Outlets must be properly secured to walls, ceilings or floors. There cannot be any exposed “Romex” type wiring. All outlets will be tested to insure they are wired properly. Wiring must either be inside the wall or in conduit. Conduit must be secured to walls or ceilings. All rooms must have a means of natural or artificial illumination.

Paint: Units built before 1978 may have lead-based paint. Units cannot have cracking, scaling, chipping, chalking, or peeling paint either on the interior or the exterior of the Unit.

Infestations: Units cannot be infested with roaches, rodents, bed bugs, etc.

General --- Requirements

Food Preparation: There must be adequate food preparation and storage areas.

Kitchen Range with Oven: All burners must work. If equipped with a pilot light, the pilot light must light the burners. The oven must work and its door must close tightly. All control knobs must be present and work. (Note: Range can be supplied either by tenant or owner)

Refrigerator: Refrigerator door gasket must be attached to the door, forming a proper seal. Refrigerator must maintain a temperature low enough to keep food from spoiling over a reasonable period of time. (Note: Refrigerator can be supplied by tenant or owner)

Kitchen Sink: Must have hot and cold running water, a drain with trap, and be properly connected to a sewer line. A sink in a bathroom does not satisfy the kitchen sink requirement. A sink in a kitchen does not satisfy the bathroom sink requirement.

Bathroom Toilet / Tub / Shower: There must be a private flush toilet available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the unit. It must be connected to a water supply, a sewer line, and be fastened tightly to the floor. The Unit must contain a bathtub or shower. The room where these facilities are located must allow privacy for the tenant and have a door with a working lock.

Bathroom Sink: Must have hot and cold running water, a drain with trap, and be properly connected to a sewer line. A sink in a bathroom does not satisfy the kitchen sink requirement. A sink in a kitchen does not satisfy the bathroom sink requirement.

Bathroom Ventilation: There must be adequate ventilation either from a window that opens or an exhaust fan. Exhaust vents must be vented to the outside, attic, or crawlspace. (Note: Exhaust fans cannot be vented into the space above a suspended ceiling)

Heating: Unit must have a permanent heating system capable of adequately heating all living areas in the unit. Portable electric, kerosene or gas "space heaters" are not an acceptable permanent heating system. Non-vented space heaters are not allowed as a permanent or temporary heat source.

Stairs/Steps/Porches/Decks: Any porches, balconies or decks that are 30+ inches above the ground must have a railing 36 inches high with balusters. All inside and outside stairs steps with 3 or more steps must have a handrail, and be structurally sound.

Site Hazards: There can be no hazards on the site -- Such as dilapidated structures, fences, trash or debris.

Smoke Detectors: Must work and be located inside each Sleeping Room. Must be at least *one* smoke alarm on each floor of the rental unit -- including basement -- if there is one. Hearing impaired tenants require a specially designed smoke alarm. It must have a very loud alarm and a bright flashing strobe light. Mount *one* of these inside and *one* outside the bedroom. Smoke alarm is optional in a laundry room.

Water Heaters: Must have a properly installed pressure relief valve. The discharge line must extend downward to within 6-18 inches from the floor & can be routed outside -- cannot be routed into a closed pipe. Wiring at arm's reach must be enclosed with flex or solid conduit tubing.

Garbage / Trash Disposal: Each unit must have adequate arrangement for garbage storage and disposal.

Most Common Causes of Failed Inspections

- **Broken or Cracked Windows -- Window won't stay open unless propped up -- Lock doesn't work**
- **Inadequate Bathroom ventilation -- Window must open or working exhaust fan must be present**
- **No handrail on three or more steps -- No railing on drop-off's exceeding 30" in height**
- **No pressure relief valve or discharge line on Water Heater -- Exposed "Romex" Type Wiring**
- **Missing Smoke Detectors /or Smoke Detectors with missing or dead batteries**
- **Loose area on carpeting or vinyl floor -- Causes a tripping hazard**
- **Leaking faucets or plumbing (includes all drain pipes)**
- **Inoperable Range Burners -- missing parts**