

13 Housing Quality Standards

Thirteen performance requirements make up the Housing Quality Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher program.

These requirements are guidelines for Housing Choice Voucher inspectors.

While there are thirteen basic categories Housing Choice Voucher inspectors are looking at, these inspectors must use their own judgment and discretion to interpret the rules in certain cases. The Housing Quality Standards include acceptability standards which can help an inspector determine if an item meets HUD's standards.

Here are some sample criteria for each performance requirement to give you an idea of what the inspector is looking for. For the complete list of requirements and standards, please refer to, Chapter 10: Housing Quality Standards, of HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook

Examples of Each Standard

1. Sanitary Facilities

Sample Criteria:

- The bathroom must be located in a private room within the residence.
- The bathroom must contain a flushing toilet, a shower or tub and a sink.
- The shower or tub and the sink must have functioning hot and cold water.

2. Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

Sample Criteria:

- The unit must have an oven and a stove or a range. A microwave oven can be substituted.
- The unit must have a kitchen sink with hot and cold water and a proper sink trap.

3. Space and Security

Sample Criteria:

- The unit must have a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom.
- Any doors or windows that are accessible from the outside must be able to be locked.

4. Thermal Environment

Sample Criteria:

- The heating system must safely provide heat to each room. The local PHA will determine what temperature is considered adequate during each month of the year.
- The cooling system must safely cool each room.

5. Illumination and Electricity

Sample Criteria:

- The living room and each bedroom must have at least one window.
- The kitchen must have at least one working outlet.
- The living room and each bedroom must have at least two working outlets.

6. Structure and Materials

Sample Criteria:

- All ceilings, walls and floors must not show any signs of bulging, buckling and must not contain large holes.
- The roof must be structurally sound.
- Handrails are required when there are four or more steps.

7. Interior Air Quality

Sample Criteria:

- Bathrooms must have a window that can be opened or must have other adequate ventilation.
- The unit must be free from dangerous pollutants, such as carbon monoxide.

8. Water Supply

Sample Criteria:

- The water supply must be free from contamination.
- Plumbing pipes and fixtures must be free from leaks.

9. Lead-Based Paint

Sample Criteria:

- Units constructed before 1978 must be free from lead-based paint hazards.
- There must be no chipping, cracking or peeling paint or other hazards.

10. Access

Sample Criteria:

- There must be two ways to exit the unit. A fire escape is considered an alternate means of exit.
- The fire escape or other emergency exit cannot be blocked.

11. Site and Neighborhood

Sample Criteria:

- There must not be excessive noise or trash accumulation in the neighborhood.
- There must not be an abnormal amount of air pollution.

12. Sanitary Conditions

Sample Criteria:

- There must not be a rodent or vermin infestation.

13. Smoke Detectors

Sample Criteria:

- There must be at least one working smoke detector on each level of the unit, including the basement. Local codes may have stricter requirements, such as placing a smoke detector outside of each bedroom.
- All smoke detectors must be operational.