

Housing Choice Voucher Program Preliminary Inspection Requirements



The City of Wichita Falls' Housing Office sets Housing Quality Standard (HQS) requirements in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations, the City of Wichita Falls International Building Codes and the City of Wichita Falls Housing Administrative Plan.

The following information is designed to assist prospective new Owners and Tenants to prepare a unit to pass the HQS inspection. The unit must pass inspection in order to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



NOTE - IF THE UNIT WAS CONSTRUCTED PRIOR TO 1978 AND WILL BE OCCUPIED BY A FAMILY WITH CHILDREN (6) YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER:

IF THERE IS ANY PEELING, FLAKING, DETERIORATED PAINT, OR DETERIORATED SUBSTRATE, INSIDE OR OUT, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, AT THE TIME OF THE INITIAL INSPECTION, THE OWNER WILL BE SUBJECT TO LEAD HAZARD REGULATIONS INCLUDING INTERIM CONTROLS OR LEAD ABATEMENT BY CERTIFIED CONTRACTORS.

PLEASE CONTACT A HOUSING INSPECTOR AT 761-7454 IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE.

FLAKING or PEELING PAINT – NOT ACCEPTABLE on either interior or exterior of unit. This includes window woodwork, all doors, columns, roof eaves, garages, storage buildings, fences, and all other accessory structures and friction surfaces, such as stair/step risers/landings. All siding shall be weather resistant and watertight without deterioration.

UTILITIES

All utilities (water, gas, electric) must be on for the initial inspection and must meet the HQS requirements.

ELECTRICAL

Wiring must be properly installed, secured, and insulated. Service must be of adequate amperage for the expected uses. Not accepted: broken/frayed wiring, loose light fixtures, missing, broken or loose cover plates on switches or outlets. Wire running along baseboards or ceiling trim **MUST BE SECURED AND PROPERLY ENCASED**. At least one light bulb per fixture must be working. Each room must have an overhead or wall-mounted light fixture or an additional electrical outlet, with the exception of the kitchen and bath, for which a permanently installed light fixture is required.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

There must be at least one separate and remote electrical outlet in the kitchen (however, multiple outlets are recommended), two outlets in the living room and bedrooms, and one outlet in all other habitable rooms. BATHROOMS do not require an outlet; however, at least one outlet is recommended. Any **NEW KITCHEN OR BATHROOM OUTLETS** shall have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection. Three-prong extension adaptors must be grounded to the outlet.

EXIT OR EXTERIOR DOORS

Effective, January 1, 1995, Texas adopted a New Security Device Statute requiring keyless type locks and peepholes on all exterior doors. Although the Housing Choice Voucher Program cannot enforce this statute, we highly recommend that every exterior door, including doors leading into a garage, have either a keyless deadbolt or slip ring and a peephole or window. Doors must be weatherproof, watertight and rodent-proof. A good working secure lock is required on all exit doors. A secondary chain or sliding bolt lock is allowed but is not to be substituted for the standard lock. It is highly recommended that sliding glass doors also have a security bar or locking pin. The bolts and security bar cannot be higher than 48 inches. **HASP OR PAD LOCKS AND SKELETON LOCKS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

EXTERIOR DOOR FRAMES, ETC.

Door jambs, stops, headers and moldings must be securely attached to the structure and should not have any splitting or deterioration that would minimize the strength and security of the door in a closed position. The door must fit well within its frame with all hardware properly attached and maintained, and be capable of being properly opened and closed. All repairs must be designed to last at least one year from the date of inspection. Makeshift repairs often do not last for this length of time.

INTERIOR DOORS

Interior doors must fit well within the frame and all hardware must be properly attached and maintained. They must have the ability to properly open and close, and must latch when in the closed position. It is highly recommended that bathroom doors have privacy hardware.

EXTERMINATION

Every owner shall be responsible for the extermination of any insects, rodents or other pests within the building or premises before tenant's move-in date. After move-in, the owner will be responsible for the extermination of multi-family units. The tenant will be responsible for the single-family units. No matter who is responsible for extermination, the unit shall be kept relatively free of pests.

FOUNDATION

Major foundation shifting which causes bulging or bowing of exterior walls will be cause for HQS failure. The foundation shall not have any openings, large or small, leading under the unit. The covering method used **MUST** be secure. Cement porches with serious cracks must be repaired.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

All units shall be reasonably free from unsanitary conditions (cleanliness). All units shall be free of any safety related defects.

APPLIANCES

A clean stove and refrigerator must be present in each unit. If the tenant furnishes the appliances, they must be present and working at final inspection. It is strongly recommended that all stove and oven burners ignite by the pilot light to prevent a safety hazard. All knobs MUST be present. The refrigerator and freezer must be clean and able to maintain an appropriate temperature to keep food from spoiling.

INTERIOR FLOORS, WALLS AND CEILINGS

Must be substantially rodent proof. The unit must be kept in safe and sound condition, good repair as needed, and capable of supporting a normal weight load. Attic openings, including those in closets, require a secure cover. Tears in carpet and/or linoleum are tripping hazards and are NOT ACCEPTABLE. Carpet that is soiled to the extent of being considered unsanitary is NOT ACCEPTABLE. Flooring materials should be installed using appropriate/recommended materials, such as tack strips versus nails/tacks, to prevent cutting/safety hazards.

ROOFS

Replacement roofs will require an approved building tag (bright orange in color) from the City of Wichita Falls Building Inspection Department.

HEATING & COOLING

A safe source of heating is a requirement before rental assistance may begin, regardless of which party is responsible. All space heaters shall have brass flex hoses and an AGA seal of approval. Dearborn type heaters are acceptable provided they have the manufacturer's label with BTU rating and UL certificate. For central HVAC, the filter must be clean and return air grills free from dust and dirt. If the owner furnishes window air conditioning units, they must be available at the time of inspection. An adequate outlet must be available. Extension cords are not recommended; however, if imperative, only a grounded cord rated and capable of serving the size of the A/C unit will be allowed. Prong adaptors are not acceptable for supplying electrical service for A/C or heating.

Note: Units with unvented heaters will not rent at the full Fair Market Rent or Payment Standard.

PLUMBING

Plumbing pipes and fixtures should be in good condition with no leaks. Water may not be discolored. Flooring under and around sink and toilet shall be solid. Toilet shall be securely mounted to the floor. Under sink plumbing penetrations/openings should be covered and well insulated as to prevent weather, water, or rodent problems. Fixtures must be reasonably clean and properly caulked.

SMOKE DETECTORS

Shall be in working order at all times and located in accordance with the National Fire Prevention Act of 1974. This is a serious failing item that needs rechecking periodically by both tenant and owner.

WATER HEATER

All water heaters should have a pressure relief valve with a 3/4 inch bleed line and meet City Plumbing Code requirements. All GAS water heaters should be properly vented through the roof and have some type of combustion air. Replacements or new gas water heater installations MUST meet current City Plumbing Code, including combustion air and sealed door.

WINDOWS

Every habitable room shall have at least one operable window facing directly outdoors to be used for ventilation and fire egress. ALL BATHROOMS must have either a good lockable window or an electrical exhaust fan. Operable locking devices are REQUIRED on all windows. Thumb locks are acceptable for metal windows. If windows are designed to open, such as metal or aluminum, then all windows shall open. Wooden windows, if not operable, shall be permanently screwed shut and caulked; however, at least one window must be operable in all rooms used for sleeping.

WINDOW CONDITION

Every window shall be weatherproof, watertight, rodent-proof and kept in working condition and good repair. Windowpanes with multi-cracks or a single crack longer than 4 inches must be replaced. (Two or more cracks in a pane are considered to be multi-cracked).



If any annual inspection reveals that a unit no longer meets Housing Quality Standards, **the owner is responsible** for correcting the deficiencies. IF THE OWNER IS UNABLE TO GET THE TENANT TO CORRECT TENANT CAUSED DEFICIENCIES AND DOES NOT EITHER REPAIR THE ITEM OR TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO EVICT THE FAMILY, THE PHA SHALL EITHER ABATE THE RENT UNTIL CORRECTED OR TERMINATE THE CONTRACT.