HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT

DEPARTMENT OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE (SECTION 8)

HQS PRE-INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Each unit rented to a Section 8 Voucher holder must pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection. The checklist below is a tool for owners to prepare their unit for an HQS Inspection. This checklist highlights some of the COMMON violations found during unit inspections. The items on this checklist must be working or completed prior to the HQS Inspection.

Listed below you will find some of the most common reasons why a unit will fail a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection. Please look your unit over carefully before the Inspector comes out. We will be unable to enter into the HAP contract if the unit fails HQS inspection.

Here is a checklist to use **prior** to the inspection. THIS LISTING IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A COMPLETE LIST OF CAUSES FOR HQS FAILURE:

	At least one battery-operated or hand-wired working smoke detector must be present on every level of the unit, including in the basement and outside of sleeping rooms. If any member of the family are hearing impaired, a detector for the hearing impaired must be installed.
	The entire unit, both inside and outside, including window frames, must be free of cracking, scaling, peeling, chipping, and loose paint. This prevents exposure to possible lead-based paint hazards.
	Where there are four or more consecutive steps, handrails must be securely attached. This applies to both the interior and exterior of the unit.
	The entire unit, interior and exterior, must be free from electrical hazards. There may be no loose, hanging, or exposed wires. All three-prong outlets must be wired correctly. A three-prong circuit tester will be used at the time of the inspection to assure safety.
	Every room used for living must have either two working outlets or one working outlet and a permanently installed light fixture.
	If the unit has a third floor sleeping room(s), finished attic, and the family is eligible to use this room for sleeping, the owner must provide a safe method of escape in the case of fire (i.e. chain ladder).
	The flue pipe leading from the furnace and hot water tank must be sealed at the chimney. Also, check to ensure that the flue pipes connecting to the furnace and hot water tank are installed correctly.
	Every room used for living must have an adequate heat source. If the source is gas, it must be vented to the outside. All heat sources, if the source is electric, it must be permanently installed and controlled by a separate thermostat.
	If the downspouts or gutters are damaged and/or missing, causing interior damage to the unit, they must be replaced or repaired. Any damage to the interior of the unit due to the missing or damaged downspouts or gutters must be repaired.
	Multi-family owners must provide “refuse disposals”; facilities include trashcans with covers, garbage chutes, or dumpsters with lids.
	All light fixtures must have working bulbs and covers. Each available light socket must have a bulb and cover.
	Unit must be free of mold/mildew-like substances.

	Breaker and fuse boxes must contain all breakers and blank covers. All boxes with lids must also have inside covers. No exposed wiring or missing knockouts.
	The unit must be empty/vacant from previous tenant; must be clean and move-in ready;
	Utilities (water, gas, electric) must be turned on for the completion of the inspection;
	No chipping or peeling paint inside or outside the unit;
	Stove must be clean and in working order and secured;
	Refrigerator must be clean and be in working order with a good door seal;
	Hot and cold running water in the kitchen and bathroom(s);
	There must be a shower or bathtub that works (refinish where porcelain or finish is defected;
	There must be a flush toilet that works, is securely mounted and does not leak;
	The bathroom must have either an outside window or an exhaust fan vented to the outside, attic or crawl space;
	There must not be any plumbing leaks; stoppers should work properly. There must not be any plugged drains (check for slow drains);
	All plumbing fixtures must have P-Traps to prevent sewer gas from leaking into the unit;
	All ground floor windows and exterior doors shall open and close as designed and must have working locks. **Double-keyed dead bolts are not permitted**;
	Each living space must have two means of fire egress (i.e. door & window);
	All electrical outlets/switches must have cover plates and be in good working condition;
	All ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) must work properly;
	There must not be any missing, broken, or cracked windows;
	The roof must not leak. Indications of a leak are discolorations or stains on the ceiling;
	The hot water heater tank must have a temperature pressure relief valve with downward discharge pipe made of galvanized steel or copper tubing that is 6 inches from the floor or directed outside the unit (no PVC). CPVC is acceptable;
	The floor covering cannot be torn or have holes that can cause someone to trip;
	Walk-offs or porches 30 inches above grade must have guard rails 36 inches from the floor;
	All security bars and windows must have a quick release mechanism on bedroom window used for egress;
	All sliding glass doors must have a lock on the door that works;
	All construction/rehabilitation (painting, carpet replacement, etc.) must be completed;
	The unit must be free from roaches or rodents;
	There must be stepping stones or walkway to the unit.

This brief listing is for the purpose of information only and is not intended as a completed listing. Check HUD and local codes for other requirements. If you have additional questions, you can contact the Inspector for that area.