

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAMS



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421 Walnut Street, P.O. Box 625
Madison, IN 47250

P. (812) 265-5858

F. (812) 265-5850

www.ovoinc.org



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WHAT ARE THE HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS?

The Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are a list of guidelines for the minimum acceptability criteria necessary for housing to qualify for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets these standards. HQS includes specific criteria that must be met for manufactured homes, congregate housing, and independent group residences.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS?

Sanitary Facilities

Sanitary Facilities must be contained within your home and be for the exclusive use of the occupants of that unit. The bathroom must be in a separate room and have a flush toilet in proper operating condition. Your home must have a fixed basin with a sink trap and hot and cold running water in proper operating condition. The unit must have a shower or a tub with hot and cold running water in proper operating condition. The facilities must utilize an approvable disposal system.

Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

Your home must have a cooking stove or range and refrigerator of appropriate size, all in operating condition. These may be supplied by either the owner or tenant. The unit must have a kitchen sink in proper operating condition with a sink trap and hot and cold running water that drains into an approvable system. There must be a space for storage, preparation, and serving of food. There must be adequate facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food waste and refuse, including temporary storage facilities where necessary (e.g., garbage containers).

Space and Security

Your home must have a living room, a kitchen area, and a bathroom. The unit must have at least one sleeping or living/sleeping room for each two persons. Windows that are accessible from the outside must be lockable. The unit's exterior door must be lockable.

Thermal Environment (Heating and Cooling Systems)

Your home must have a safe heating system (and safe cooling system where present), in proper operating condition, that can provide adequate heat (and cooling, if applicable), either directly or indirectly, to each room in order to assure a healthy living environment appropriate to the climate. The unit must not contain unvented room heaters which burn gas, oil, or kerosene.

Illumination (Lighting) and Electricity

There must be at least one window in the living room and sleeping room. The kitchen area and the bathroom must have a permanent ceiling or wall-type light fixture in working condition. The kitchen area must have at least one electrical outlet in operating condition. The living room and each bedroom must have at least two electrical outlets in operating condition. Permanent overhead or wall mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets.



Structure and Materials

Ceiling, walls, and floors must have no serious defects. The roof must be structurally sound and weather tight. The exterior wall structure and surface must have no serious defects. The condition and equipment of interior and exterior stairways, hallways, porches, walkways, etc. must not present a danger of tripping and falling. Elevators must be working and safe. Manufactured homes must have a smoke detector in working condition. Manufactured homes must be securely anchored by a tie down device which distributes the load imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist wind overturning and sliding.

Interior Air Quality

Your home must be free from dangerous levels of air pollution. The unit must have adequate air circulation. Bathroom areas must have one openable window or other adequate exhaust ventilation. Any room used for sleeping must have at least one openable window, if the window was so designed.

Water Supply

The unit must be served by an approvable public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination.

Lead-Based Paint

We must obtain a completed and signed Lead-Based Paint Owner Certification (HF-39-C) signifying that all HQS lead-based paint requirements have been met on any property built prior to January 1, 1978 that has lead-based paint hazards. This certification must be received before the execution of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract or within the period stated by OVO in the owner HQS violation notice.

Access

The unit must be used and maintained without unauthorized use of other private properties. The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire.

Site and Neighborhood

The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free of serious conditions that would endanger the health and safety of residents.

Sanitary Condition

The unit and its equipment must be free of serious vermin and rodent infestation.

Smoke Detectors

At least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector must be present and working on each level of the unit, including the basement, but not the crawl spaces and unfinished attic. If the dwelling unit is occupied by any hearing-impaired person, smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons.

WHAT ARE MY LANDLORD'S OBLIGATIONS?

The landlord must maintain the unit in accordance with these standards. If the landlord fails to do so, OVO must take prompt and vigorous action, possibly including termination, suspension, or reduction of housing assistance payments or termination of the Housing Assistance Payments Contract. We cannot make any assistance payments for a dwelling that fails to meet these standards, unless the owner corrects the defect within the period specified by OVO, and we verify the correction. If a defect is life threatening, the landlord must correct it within 24 hours. Other defects must be corrected within 30 days (or an approved extension). The landlord is not responsible for a breach of the Housing Quality Standards that is not caused by the landlord, due to normal wear and tear, and for which the tenant is responsible.

WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS AS A TENANT?

The tenant is responsible for a breach of the Housing Quality Standards that is caused by any of the following:

- Failure to pay for utilities which are to be paid by the tenant
- Failure to provide and maintain appliances which are to be provided by the tenant
- A member of the household or guest damages the unit or premises beyond ordinary wear and tear.

If a breach caused by the tenant is life threatening, the tenant must correct it within 24 hours. Other tenant caused defects must be corrected within 30 days. If the family causes a breach, we must take prompt and vigorous action, possibly including termination of assistance to enforce tenant obligations.