

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER HQS



Serving the residents
of Jefferson, Jennings
and Scott Counties
since 1965



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WHAT ARE HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS?

The Housing Quality Standards (HQS) are a list of guidelines for the minimum acceptability criteria necessary for a housing unit to qualify for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets these standards.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

Structure and Materials

The exterior wall structure and surface must have no serious defects. The roof must be structurally sound and weather tight. Interior ceilings, walls, and floors must have no serious defects. The condition of interior and exterior areas must not present a danger of tripping and falling. Manufactured homes must be securely anchored by a tie down device to resist wind overturning and sliding.

Space and Security

Each unit must have a living room, a kitchen area, and a bathroom. The unit must have at least one sleeping room for each two persons; a living room may count for this requirement. Windows that are accessible from the outside must be lockable. The unit's exterior door must be lockable.

Interior Air Quality

The unit must have adequate air circulation. Bathroom areas must have one operable window or other adequate exhaust ventilation. Any room used for sleeping must have at least one operable window, if the window was so designed.

Heating and Cooling Systems

Each home must have a safe heating system (and safe cooling system where present), in proper operating condition, which can provide adequate heat 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.

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. The kitchen area must have at least one electrical outlet. The living room and each bedroom must have at least two electrical outlets. Permanent overhead or wall mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets. All required light fixtures must be in good working condition and all electrical outlets/switches must have cover plates and be in good working conditions. All 3-prong outlets must be properly grounded. GFCI outlets must serve areas in close proximity to water sources.



Water Supply

The unit must be served by an approvable public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination and leaks. Water heater tanks must have a temperature pressure relief valve with downward discharge line made of to-code materials.

Sanitary Facilities

Sanitary facilities must be present in the unit and be for the exclusive use of the unit's occupants. The bathroom must be in a separate room and have a flush toilet. The unit must have a shower or a tub with hot and cold running water. The facilities must utilize an approvable wastewater disposal system. All required elements must be in proper operating condition. The unit and its equipment must be free of serious vermin, rodent or insect infestation.

Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

Units 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 fixed basin, 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).

Lead-Based Paint

We must obtain a completed and signed Lead-Based Paint Owner Certification (HF-39-C) signifying that the tenant was properly informed about the dangers of lead-based paint in properties built prior to January 1, 1978. 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. Chipping/peeling paint inside or outside a pre-1978 built dwelling is not acceptable.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide 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 or 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. The unit must have one functioning Carbon Monoxide detector per level if there are gas appliances/utilities or an attached garage.

Access, Site and Neighborhood

The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire. Stairs and porches (30 inches above grade) must have handrails. The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free of serious conditions that would endanger the health and safety of residents.

This is not a complete list of all requirements, simply an overview. For complete list of HQS guidelines, please contact OVO.

WHAT ARE THE LANDLORD OBLIGATIONS?

The landlord must maintain the unit in accordance with HQS standards. We cannot make any assistance Housing Assistance Payments for a dwelling that fails to meet these standards, unless the owner corrects the defect within the required timeframe and OVO verifies correction. If a defect is life-threatening, the landlord must correct it within 24 hours. Non-life-threatening defects must be corrected within 30 days; extensions may be requested and approved. If the landlord fails to correct HQS defects in the required timeframe, OVO must take prompt and vigorous action, which could include suspension, reduction or termination of payments. The landlord is not responsible for a breach of the Housing Quality Standards that is caused by normal wear and tear, or for which the tenant is responsible.

WHAT ARE TENANT OBLIGATIONS?

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 will take prompt and vigorous action, possibly including termination of assistance to enforce tenant obligations.