



**DALLAS COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
HOUSING DIVISION**



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Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Housing Quality Standards (HQS)

In addition to assuring the decent, safe, and sanitary conditions of a unit before occupancy by an eligible family, HUD regulations specify thirteen (13) performance and acceptability requirements that a unit must meet in order to satisfy Housing Quality Standards.

Sanitary Facilities

- The bathroom must be contained within the dwelling unit, afford privacy (usually meaning a door, although no lock is required), and be for exclusive use of the occupants.
- All public or private waste disposal systems servicing the unit or facilities must be either state or locally approved.
- The tub/shower, toilet, and basin/lavatory must have a proper sewer trap, drain and vents to prevent the escape of sewer gases or severe leakage of water. Drains must not be clogged and the toilet must flush. Hot and cold water must be available at the tub, shower, and lavatory taps.

Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

- The dwelling unit must have suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a sanitary manner.
- Hot plates are not acceptable substitutes for stoves or ranges. The oven must heat and all burners on the stove or range must work. All stove or range knobs must be present. The stove or range must be free of hazardous gas hook-ups, gas leaks, or electrical hazards.
- The refrigerator must be of adequate size for the family and capable of maintaining a temperature low enough to keep food from spoiling. The PHA may reject the size of the refrigerator. The freezer space must be present and working and the equipment must not present an electrical hazard.
- The sink must have hot and cold running water from the faucets and a proper working sink drain with gas trap. It must also be hooked to an approved water and sewer system.

Space and Security

- The dwelling unit must provide adequate space and security for the family.
- At a minimum, the dwelling unit must have a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom.
- The dwelling unit must have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for every two persons.
- Dwelling unit windows that are accessible from the outside must have locks.
- Exterior doors to the unit must have locks.

Thermal Environment

- The dwelling unit must be able to provide a thermal environment that is healthy for the human body.
- There must be a safe system for heating the dwelling unit, such as an electric baseboard, radiator, or forced air systems. In order to ensure a healthy living environment that is appropriate for the climate the system must be able to provide adequate heat either directly or indirectly to each room.
- The heating and/or air conditioning system must be in proper operating condition.
- The dwelling unit must not contain room heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene. Electric heaters are acceptable.

Illumination and Electricity

- Each room must have adequate natural or artificial illumination to permit normal indoor activities and to support the health and safety of occupants.
- The dwelling unit must have sufficient electrical sources so that occupants can use essential electrical appliances.
- Electrical fixtures and wiring must not pose a fire hazard.
- There must be at least one window in both the living room and each sleeping room.
- The kitchen area and the bathroom must have a permanent ceiling or wall-mounted fixture in proper operating condition.
- The kitchen must have at least one electrical outlet in proper operating condition.
- The living room and each sleeping space must have at least two electrical outlets in proper operating condition. Permanent overhead or wall-mounted light fixtures may count as one of the required electrical outlets.

Structure and Materials

- The dwelling unit must be structurally sound.
- The structure must not present any threat to the health and safety of the occupants and must protect the occupants from the environment.
- Ceiling, walls, and floors must not have any serious defects such as severe bulging or leaning, large holes, loose surface materials, severe buckling, missing parts, or other serious damages.
- The roof must be structurally sound and weather-proof.
- The foundation, exterior wall structure and surface must not have any serious defects such as serious leaning, buckling, sagging, large holes, or defects that may result in air infiltration or vermin infestation.
- The condition and equipment of interior and exterior stairs, halls, porches, and walkways must not present the danger of tripping and falling.
- Handrails are required when four or more steps (risers) are present, and protective railings are required when porches, balconies and stoops are thirty inches off the ground.

Interior Air Quality

- The dwelling unit must be free of air pollutant levels that threaten the occupants' health.
- The dwelling unit must be free from dangerous air pollution levels from carbon monoxide, sewer gas, fuel gas, dust, and other harmful pollutants.
- There must be adequate air circulation in the dwelling unit.
- Bathroom areas must have one operable window or other adequate ventilation.
- Any sleeping room must have at least one window. If the window was designed to be opened, it must be in proper working condition.

Water Supply

- The water supply must be free of contamination.
- The dwelling unit must be served by an approved public or private water supply that is sanitary and free from contamination.
- Plumbing fixtures, pipes, and water heaters must be free of leaks and threats to health and safety hazards to families.

Lead-Based Paint

- The Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act as amended (42 U. S.C. 4821-4846) and the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 and implementing regulations 24 CFR Part 35 Subparts A, B, M, and R apply to the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- The requirements apply to dwelling units built prior to 1978 that are occupied or can be occupied by families with children under six years of age, excluding zero bedroom dwellings.
- During initial and annual inspection of pre-1978 units that are occupied or will be occupied by families with children under 6 years of age, the inspector must conduct a visual assessment for deteriorated paint surfaces and the owner must stabilize deteriorate surfaces. Applicable areas include painted surfaces within the dwelling unit, exterior painted surfaces associated with the dwelling unit and common areas of the building through which residents must pass to gain access to the unit and areas that are frequented by residents that are under 6 years of age, including play areas and child care facilities.

Access

- Use and maintenance of the unit must be possible without unauthorized use of other private properties.
- The unit must have private access.
- In case of fire, the building must contain an alternate means of exit such as; fire stairs, or egress through windows, including use of a ladder for windows above the second floor.

Site and Neighborhood

- The site and neighborhood must be reasonably free from disturbing noises and reverberations or other dangers to the health, safety, and general welfare of the occupants.
- The site and neighborhood may not be subject to serious adverse natural or manmade environmental conditions, such as dangerous walks or steps, instability, flooding, poor drainage, septic tank back-ups or sewer hazards, mudslides, abnormal air pollution, smoke or dust excessive noise, vibration, or vehicular traffic, excessive accumulation of trash, vermin, or rodent infestation, or fire hazards.

Sanitary Condition

- The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition and free of vermin and rodent infestation.

Smoke Detectors

- On each level of the dwelling unit including basements, but excluding spaces and unfinished attics at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector in proper operating condition must be present.
- Smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standards (NFPA) 74 or its successor standards.
- If a hearing-impaired person is occupying the dwelling unit, the smoke detectors must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons as specified in NFPA 74.