

Housing Quality Standards

The following information highlights the Housing Quality Standards that are required for a unit to pass an inspection in 15 major areas of a house or apartment

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| 1. Living Room | 9. Ceilings, Walls and Floors |
| 2. Kitchen | 10. Windows and Doors |
| 3. Bathroom | 11. Stairs, Rails, and Porches |
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Living Room

- * Every unit must have at least one habitable room that is not a kitchen or bathroom
- * At least one window and must be openable if designed to open
- * At least two electrical outlets or one outlet and one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture

Kitchen

- * Every unit must have a kitchen for the preparation and storage of food
- * At least one electrical outlet and one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture
- * Must have a stove or range with working burners and an oven
- * All stove or range and oven knobs must be present and legible
- * Must have a working refrigerator
- * Must have a sink with hot and cold running water that drains properly

Bathroom

- * At least one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture
- * Must have a working toilet
- * Must have a secure and permanently installed sink with hot and cold running water that drains properly
- * Must have a working tub or shower with hot and cold running water that drains properly
- * At least one openable window or a working exhaust vent system that vents to the outside
- * Must be free from broken bathroom fixtures with sharp edges
- * Must be free from serious health and sanitation problems including clogged toilets, water leaks, or sewer gas

Bedroom

- * At least two electrical outlets or one electrical outlet and one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture
- * At least one window and must be openable if designed to open
- * At least 70 square feet for one person and 100 square feet for two people
- * Living room can be a sleeping room as long as it contains at least one window and two electrical outlets or one outlet and one permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture

Housing Quality Standards continued...

Electrical

- * No signs of electrical hazards including broken, frayed or non insulated wiring, loose or improper wire connections to outlets
- * No light fixtures hanging from electric wiring with no other firm support
- * No overloaded circuits or exposed fuse box connections
- * Cover plates are required on light switches and electrical outlets and must not be cracked or broken
- * Electrical outlets must not be cracked
- * Electrical outlets are required to be permanently installed
- * At initial inspection, light globes are required on light fixtures including outside lights. At annual inspections, globes may be removed as long as there are no exposed wires or other safety hazards
- * Light bulbs are required in all sockets of all light fixtures including outside lights
- * No electric cords under rugs or other floor coverings
- * Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI also called Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt GFCI) electrical outlets the must test and reset properly

Heating and Plumbing

- * Heating equipment is capable of providing adequate heat to all rooms used for living
- * Unit is free from unvented fuel burning space heaters or other types of unsafe heating conditions including fire hazards and escaping exhaust gases into the living areas
- * Unit is free from combustible material around the furnace and water heater
- * Water heater discharge pipe is 6 - 24 inches from the floor and the diameter must not be reduced
- * Unit must have piped hot and cold running water
- * Faucets must work properly with the hot water on the left and cold water on the right
- * Sinks must have a gas trap and water must drain properly

Smoke Detectors

- * Smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with and meet the requirements of National Fire Protection Association Standard (NFPA) 74 or its successors
- * DO NOT install smoke detectors in kitchens, garages or other spaces where the temperature can fall below 32 degrees F or exceed 100 degrees F
- * DO NOT locate smoke detectors closer than 3 feet from a door to a kitchen, bathroom with a tub or shower, or supply registers of a forced air heating or cooling system
- * Smoke detectors must be on each level of the unit including basements
- * If installed to protect a basement, the smoke detector must be on the ceiling at the bottom of the stairway leading to the floor above.
- * If the unit is occupied by a hearing impaired individual, a smoke detector must be installed in the bedroom and have a visible signal.
- * If the unit was built after June 1, 2002, a smoke detector must be in every sleeping room.
- * For rooms with flat ceilings and walls smoke detectors should be mounted on the ceiling at least 4 inches from a wall.
- * If installed in an area with an open-joisted ceiling, the smoke detector must be installed on the bottom of the joist

[See Smoke Detector Installation for more information.](#)

Housing Quality Standards continued...

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors

- * Ceilings and walls must be structurally sound and free from hazardous defects including large cracks or holes that allow drafts to enter the unit, severe bulging, buckling or leaning, falling surface materials, loose sections of plaster in danger of falling, or visible signs of water damage as a result of a leaking roof or exterior
- * Ceilings, walls, and floors must be structurally sound
- * Ceilings must not be missing parts such as ceiling tiles
- * All interior ceilings and walls must be painted
- * Floors must not have large cracks or holes, missing or damaged parts such as floor boards, major movement under walking stress, or damaged floor coverings such as carpet or vinyl that could cause someone to trip
- * Ceilings, walls, and floors must be free from protruding nails or other sharp objects
- * Carpets will fail if it appears to have urine or fecal matter or other obvious safety hazards

Doors and Windows

- * Doors must open, close, and latch properly
- * Interior doors must not have exterior keyed entry locking doorknobs or deadbolt locks
- * Doors, including bi-fold closet doors, must be secure and pose no hazard of falling
- * Windows and doors are required to have locks if they are accessible from the outside including windows that can be reached from the outside from ground level, a fire escape, porch or other outside place that can be reached from the ground
- * All windows which were designed to open and close must maintain this function unless reasonable documentation is provided to prove the window can no longer serve the function of opening and closing, it is neither repairable nor reasonable to replace. In these situations, the room must have adequate egress and the window which can be used safely as a fire exit must be clearly marked
- * Openable windows and doors are operable and not blocked, nailed shut, or in any other condition that would prevent exit
- * At initial inspection screens are required on all openable windows and must be in good condition with out tears or holes
- * Windows may not have any missing, broken or dangerously loose or cracked panes
- * Windows must be reasonably weather tight to prevent serious drafts from entering the unit

Housing Quality Standards continued...

Stairs, Rails, and Porches

- * Must be structurally sound and free from tripping and falling hazards
- * Must be free from protruding nails
- * Stairs have no loose, broken, rotting, missing steps or boards
- * Stairs must not have ripped, torn or frayed stair coverings
- * Stairs, both interior and exterior, must have a secure handrail when there are 4 or more consecutive steps
- * Porches, decks, and balconies 30 inches or more above ground must have secure handrails
- * Rails must not have large number of missing sections of balusters
- * These requirements also include steps leading to the unit which are not physically attached to the building

Interior Stairs, Common Halls, Elevators, and Exits

- * Must pass all the requirements of STAIRS, RAILS AND PORCHES
- * Must be free from accumulation of objects, garbage or other debris
- * Must have adequate lighting such that all treads and risers are illuminated
- * Carpets or rubber mats must not be ripped, torn or frayed
- * Elevators have a current inspection certificate and are operating safely
- * Must have an acceptable alternate fire exit from the building that is not blocked or un-useable do to debris, storage, broken locks, or doors and windows that are nailed shut
- * Acceptable exits may include:
 - * An openable window if the unit is on the first or second floor or is easily accessible to the ground
 - * A back door opening onto a porch with a stairway leading to the ground
 - * Fire escape, fire ladder or fire stairs
- * Unit is accessible with out having to go through another unit

Garbage, Infestation, Mold, and Air Pollution

- * Unit interior, exterior, and site must be free of trash, garbage and debris including branches, boards and other building materials, tires, sofas and other discarded furniture, abandoned or junk motor vehicles, and motor vehicle parts
- * Unit has adequate covered facilities for temporary storage and disposal of garbage which may include trash cans with covers, garbage chutes and dumpsters
- * Unit is free from infestation by rats, mice, insects and other vermin such as roaches
- * Unit is free of mold and mildew
- * Unit is free from abnormally high levels of air pollution from vehicular exhaust, sewer gas, fuel gas, dust, smoke or other harmful gases or noxious pollutants

Lead-Based Paint

- * All interior and exterior surfaces must be free from cracking, scaling, peeling, chipping and loose paint if tenants include children under the age of six and the unit was built before 1978
- * Includes walls, stairs, decks, porches, railings, common areas, windows and doors

[See Lead-based Paint for more information.](#)

Housing Quality Standards continued...

Building Exterior

- * Foundation must properly support the building and keep ground water out of the basement under normal rainfall conditions
- * Foundation is structurally sound and free from hazards including
 - * Evidence of major settling
 - * Large cracks or holes
 - * Severe leaning
 - * Large sections of crumbling brick, stone, or concrete
 - * Undermining of footings, walls
 - * Major deterioration of wood support members due to water damage or termites
- * Roof is weather tight, structurally sound, and free from hazards including
 - * Serious buckling or sagging
 - * Large holes
 - * Large patches of missing shingles
 - * Other defects that would allow significant air or water infiltration
- * Gutters and downspouts are secure, free from hazards, and channel water away from the exterior walls and foundation so that there is no water damage to the building
- * Exterior surfaces are weather tight, structurally sound, and free from hazards including
 - * Buckling, bowing, or leaning
 - * Large cracks
 - * Falling or missing pieces of masonry
 - * Deterioration that would allow significant air or water infiltration
- * Chimney safely carries smoke, fumes, and gassed from the unit to the outside, is structurally sound, and free from hazards including
 - * Serious leaning
 - * Missing many bricks and mortar
 - * Metal chimney parts fit tightly and are properly attached to the building

Site and Neighborhood Conditions

- * Site and immediate neighborhood are free from conditions which would seriously and continuously endanger the health or safety of the residents including
- * Other buildings on, or near the property, that pose serious hazards like a dilapidated shed or garage with potential for structural collapse
- * Evidence of flooding or major drainage problems
- * Proximity to open sewage
- * Fire hazards
- * Abnormal air pollution or smoke
- * Continuous or excessive vibration of vehicular traffic