



Guiding landlords to a successful relationship with LHA

Lighthouse

Inspection Guide

Prepare for your LHA inspection

LHA adheres to HUD's Housing Quality Standards to ensure decent, safe and sanitary housing through housing inspections. Before a lease can be signed, a unit must pass LHA's inspection process.

Landlords can help themselves by being prepared for an LHA inspection. If a unit does not pass inspection, repairs must be made and another inspection completed before a contract can be signed. If repairs are not made, the unit will not be eligible for Section 8 Rental Voucher Program.

The following guide highlights quality standards required for a unit to pass inspection in six major areas of a house or apartment:

1. Living room
2. Kitchen
3. Bathroom
4. Bedroom/other room
5. Building exterior, heating and plumbing
6. Health and safety

LHA encourages landlords to use this guide as a tool to complete pre-inspections.



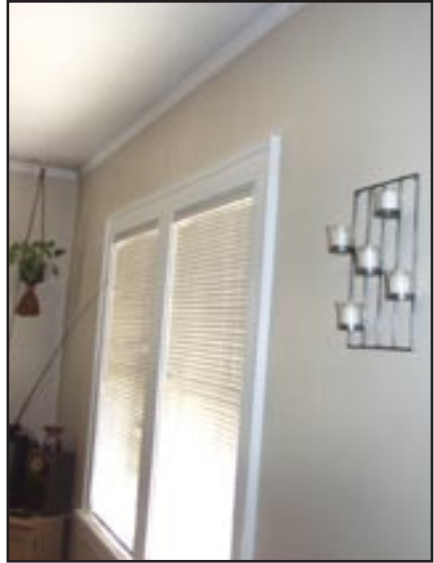
Lincoln Housing Authority
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Living room

Every unit must contain one habitable room used for or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating purposes, which is not a kitchen area, bathroom, laundry, furnace room, pantry, utility room, foyer, stairway, closet, storage space or workshop.

When inspecting living rooms, LHA inspectors look for:

- Two working electric outlets or one outlet and one permanent overhead light fixture.
- Outlet permanently installed in the baseboard, wall or floor.
- No signs of electrical hazards including: broken wiring, non-insulated wiring, frayed wiring, overloaded circuits, missing or cracked cover plates on switches or outlets, or cracked outlets.
- Globes on light fixtures.
- At least one window, in good condition, which provides adequate natural light.
- Ceiling and walls present none of the following: large cracks or holes that allow drafts, severe bulging, large amounts of loose or falling surface material such as plaster.
- Floors are in good condition and display none of the following defects: large cracks or holes, missing or warped floor boards or covering that would cause someone to trip.
- A working lock on all windows and doors that can be reached from the outside, a common hallway, a fire escape, porch or other outside place that can be reached from the ground. Windows that are meant to be open are required to open.
- No peeling or chipping paint, if tenants include children under the age of six and the house or apartment was built before 1978.



For your living room to pass inspection it must have at least one window. Walls and ceilings must be in good condition and have no large cracks or holes, severe bulging or large amounts of loose or falling material.



Living rooms must have two working outlets or one outlet and one permanent overhead light fixture. Watch for the bottom piece being broken out on outlets. This is a common defect. Outlets cannot be cracked or have a piece removed or broken off.

Kitchen

Every unit must have a kitchen or kitchen area for the preparation and storage of food. Kitchens need to contain an oven, stove or range, refrigerator and sink with piped hot and cold water. All required equipment must be in operating condition.

What LHA inspectors look for:

- At least one working electrical outlet and one working, permanently installed, securely fastened ceiling or wall light fixture.
- Both top and bottom oven elements are in working order.
- Stove or ranges have top burners that work.
- Evidence of hazardous conditions such as detached door, shorts in electric burners, missing stove or range knobs, gas leaks or improper gas hook-ups.
- If an oven has a broiler, it must be in working condition.
- Ovens must be adequate in size for the family. Hot plates are not acceptable substitutes for stoves or ranges.
- Refrigerators work, fit the needs of the family and have freezer capabilities.
- An attached sink is present with hot and cold running water, is properly connected to a drain with a gas trap and is not clogged.
- Sink drains into an approved public or private system.
- Space is available for the storing, preparing and serving food. Built-in space, equipment tables or portable storage facilities are acceptable.
- Adequate facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food waste and refuse.
- Cabinet doors must be properly secured.



Kitchens must have at least one electrical outlet, adequate storage space, an oven and stove or range in working order.



A permanently attached kitchen sink must be present. Sinks must have hot and cold running water and be properly connected to a drain with a gas trap. Severe leakage which could cause significant damage to the floor or cabinets would be cause for the sink to fail inspection.



Refrigerators must adequately fit the needs of the family and be capable of maintaining a temperature low enough so that food does not spoil over a reasonable period of time. This includes some capability for storing frozen foods.

Bathroom

Each unit must have at least one bathroom that is a separate room with an operating toilet. It must have a fixed wall mounted basin, shower or tub, ventilation system, permanent light fixture and secure door that closes.

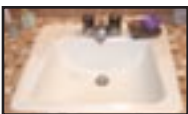
Bathrooms must be free of serious health and sanitary problems such as clogged toilet, serious water leak or sewer gas. Any hazardous conditions will result in failure, such as damaged, broken or cracked fixtures that may result in leaking or injury.

What LHA inspectors look for:

- Bathroom provides privacy, i.e. a door in working order.
- Condition of windows, ceilings, walls and floors are sanitary.
- Toilet seat not cracked.
- Toilet contained within a separate room in the unit and is exclusively for the occupant of the unit.
- Toilet is connected to water supply, has acceptable drainage system and it works.
- Toilet flushes, is not clogged and mechanism within water closet works.
- No water on the floor.
- No gas odor.
- Washbasin is permanent. It may be separate from other bathroom facilities but must be within the unit. A kitchen sink is not acceptable.
- Unit must have a tub or shower located in the unit. It may be separate from other facilities.
- Washbasin must be operable and have a gas trap.
- Tub or shower and washbasin are connected to a system that delivers hot and cold running water and is operable.
- Bathroom has acceptable ventilation. Vents to the outside, attic or crawl space or has an openable window or working exhaust system.
- Acceptable ventilation systems include electric fan vent, either wall or ceiling mounted, or gravity/flow chimney effect vent pipe or shaft that permits air to escape to the outside without the use of an electric fan.
- Bathroom has at least one permanent light fixture in working condition.
- An outlet can not be substituted for a permanent light fixture.
- Outlets or electrical appliances located too near the tub are considered a hazard. This includes an outlet or appliance too near where water may splash. Outlets on a medicine cabinet are not considered a hazard. No separate outlet is required.



A unit must have a tub or shower which is in working order and connected to a system that delivers hot and cold running water.



Inspectors note if washbasins have low water pressure, dripping faucet, minor leaks, cracked or chipped porcelain or a slow drain. Right: Toilets must be private and for the sole use of the occupant of a unit.



Bedrooms/other rooms

What LHA inspectors look for while inspecting bedrooms:

- Walls are clean, painted and free from holes, peeling, chipping or loose paint.
- Unit is free of trash or debris.
- Each bedroom has an area of at least 7 by 10 feet.
- Each bedroom has at least two electrical outlets or one electrical outlet and an overhead light.
- Each bedroom has a window, and, if designed to be opened, the window operates properly.
- First floor windows must have locks.
- Electrical outlets, switches, and light fixtures meet building codes.
- Interior bedroom and bathroom doors are installed throughout the unit.
- Smoke alarms are installed on each level of the unit near the bedrooms and are operational.
- Carpet and rugs are clean and free of tears/trip hazards.
- Ceilings are free from large cracks or holes, severe bulging, and loose or falling surface material.
- Security bars, if provided, are a properly installed breakaway type.
- Window and doors are operable and not blocked, nailed shut, or in any other condition that would prevent exit.
- Unit is free of mold and mildew.
- No propane, natural or methane gas odor is detectable.
- No sewer odor is detectable.
- No evidence of insect or vermin presence.



Bedrooms must be at least 7 feet by 10 feet.

Building Exterior

Building exterior standards include inspection of foundation, stairs, porches, rails, roofs, gutters, walls, chimney, site and neighborhood conditions.

What LHA inspectors look for:

- Foundation properly supports building and keeps ground water out of the basement in normal rainfall conditions.
- Foundation presents none of the following defects: large cracks or holes; large sections of crumbling brick, stone or concrete; weak footings, walls, posts or slabs; or deterioration of wood supports due to water damage or termites.
- Condition of exterior stairs, railings and porches are sound and free from tripping and falling hazards.

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Building Exterior, Con't.

- Stairs have no broken, rotten, or missing steps or boards.
- Handrails are present where there are four or more consecutive steps.
- Porches or balconies more than 30 inches above ground have secure railings.
- Roof is weathertight and protects unit from outside elements.
- Roof has no large holes, serious buckling or sagging.
- There is no interior ceiling or wall water damage due to the roof.
- Exterior wall structure and surface have none of the following: large cracks or holes, falling or missing masonry pieces, severe buckling, bowing or leaning.
- Chimney is structurally sound and safely carries smoke, fumes, and gasses outside of unit.
- Chimney is not missing bricks or mortar.
- Metal chimney parts fit tightly and are properly attached.
- Manufactured homes are securely anchored by a tiedown device, and are resistant to wind overturning and sliding.
- Dwelling does not have a heavy accumulation of garbage, discarded furniture, and other debris. This does not apply to temporarily stored items awaiting removal.
- Adequately covered refuse facilities are available. This includes trash can with covers, garbage chutes, or dumpster.
- The following site or neighborhood conditions could result in an inspection failure: evidence of flooding, drainage problems or large land settlement; proximity to open sewage; other buildings on or near property pose serious hazards such as a dilapidated shed or garage.



Steps leading into a unit but not physically attached to the building are included in LHA inspections. Handrails are required with four or more steps and/or a height of 30 inches.



A chimney will fail inspection if there is evidence of serious leaning or deterioration such as missing bricks and mortar.



A dwelling must have adequately covered refuse facilities which includes trash can with cover, garbage chutes or dumpsters.



Roofs must be structurally sound and display no signs of serious buckling, sagging or large holes.

Heating and Plumbing

Ensuring decent, safe and sanitary housing means inspecting heating and plumbing.

What LHA inspectors look for:

- Unit provides adequate heating system which is capable of delivering enough heat to assure a healthy environment in the unit.
- Primary source of heat does not include portable room heaters, kitchen stoves or ranges with a built-in heat units.
- Each room used for living has a direct or indirect heat source. Direct heat includes a working radiator, hot air register or baseboard heat. Indirect heat means if there is no heat source present in the room, heat can enter the room easily from a heated adjacent room.
- Unsafe heat sources will result in inspection failure. Examples include unvented fuel burning space heaters, portable kerosene units, or unvented open flame portable units.
- Heating system display no significant breakage or damage.
- System is properly connected, ensuring exhaust gases do not enter living area.
- System displays no signs of improper installation of equipment such as proximity of fuel tank to heat source and absence of safety devices.
- Heating system has no evidence of heavy buildup of soot, creosote, or other substance in the chimney.
- Combustible materials not found near heat source of flue.
- Gas or oil hot water heater is located in living areas or closets without safety hazards such as cluttered closet with cloth and paper items stacked against it.
- Gas hot water heaters in bedrooms or other living areas must have safety dividers or shields.
- Water heaters have a temperature pressure relief valve and discharge line directed toward the floor or outside of the living area.
- Gas or oil hot water heaters must be vented into a properly installed chimney or flue leading outside.
- Water supply must be connected to a city or town water system.
- Plumbing shows no signs of major leaks from the main water drain and feed pipes, often located in the basement.
- Pipes display no sign of serious corrosion such as discolored water.
- Sewer must be connected to the city or town sewer system.
- Sewage system display none of the following: strong sewer gas smell in basement or outside of unit, numerous clogged or very slow drains or marshy area outside of unit above septic field.



Units must have an adequate heating system capable of delivering enough heat to assure a healthy environment in the unit.

Health and Safety

What LHA inspectors look for:

- Units must have private access without having to go through another unit or other private property. It must also feature an alternate means of exit from the building in case of fire or other emergency.
- Exits must be clear for use and not be blocked or obstructed by debris or used as a storage area. Acceptable types of exits include fire escape or stairs, openable window if on the first or second floor, windows above second floors with use of ladder, and back doors opening onto a porch with stairway to the ground.
- Windows and doors must operate properly and fire escapes or stairs need to be secure and stable.
- Signs the unit is free from rats or severe infestations by mice vermin. A severe infestation means a condition that is serious and persistent.
- Large rat holes, droppings, runs and sightings may indicate infestation.
- Unit should be free of large piles of trash, garbage and discarded furniture and debris both inside and outside.
- Unit must contain adequate, covered facilities for temporary storage and disposal of food waste which include trash cans with covers, garbage chutes, or dumpster.
- Interior and common area stairwells will fail inspection if the following are present: loose, broken or missing steps; absent or insecure railings; inadequate lighting; accumulation of objects or debris on steps; ripped, torn or frayed carpeting or mats; missing sections of vertical railing; or handrails missing on a section of four or more steps.
- Interior hazards including protruding nails, broken bathroom fixtures with jagged edges or doors in danger of falling due to faulty hinges.
- Dwellings with elevators must have a current local or state inspection certificate and be in safe working condition.
- Units must have adequate air circulation and be free from high levels of air pollution caused by carbon monoxide, sewer gas, fuel gas, dust or other harmful pollutants.
- Bathroom areas must have one openable window or other adequate exhaust ventilation. Any room for sleeping must have at least one openable window, if the window was so designed. It must have an openable window or door which leads directly to the exterior.
- Site and immediate neighborhood must be free from conditions which would seriously or continuously endanger the tenant's health and safety.
- Exterior conditions affecting health and safety include deteriorated siding, soffits, concrete steps or sidewalks, or hanging rain gutters.
- Conditions which would fail inspection include: dilapidated shed or garage, evidence of flooding or major drainage problems, proximity to open sewage, fire hazards, continuous abnormal air pollution or smoke, or continuous or excessive vibration caused by vehicular traffic.
- Each unit must have at least one battery-operated or hardwired smoke detector on each level of the unit, including basements, and be easily accessible to attics with stairs.
- Smoke detectors must work and be clearly audible. They must be on ceilings and directly outside of a bedroom.



Interior or common area stairways frequently fail inspection due to missing vertical rails.