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CHAPTER 10

HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS

10.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The goal of the housing choice voucher program is to provide “decent, safe and sanitary” housing at an affordable cost to low-income families. To accomplish this, program regulations set forth basic housing quality standards (HQS) which all units must meet before assistance can be paid on behalf of a family and at least annually throughout the term of the assisted tenancy. HQS defines “standard housing” and establishes the minimum criteria necessary for the health and safety of program participants.

HQS regulations provide performance requirements and acceptability criteria to meet each performance requirement. HQS includes requirements for all housing types, including single and multi-family dwelling units, as well as specific requirements for special housing types such as manufactured homes, congregate housing, single room occupancy (SROs), shared housing and group residences (GRs). Requirements for Special Housing Types are discussed in Chapter 17.

The HUD Housing Inspection Manual for Section 8 Housing, available through the HUD user at 800-245-2691, and the HUD Inspection Form, form HUD-52580 (3/01) and Inspection Checklist, form HUD 52580-A (9/00), available through HUDCLIPS website: www.hudclips.org, provide guidance to PHAs in interpreting the standards, as well as HUD regulations.

10.2 HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

At least annually, it is the responsibility of the PHA to conduct inspections of units to determine compliance with HQS prior to the execution of the entire term of the assisted lease. Inspections may be completed by PHA staff or by contract personnel. HQS consists of the following thirteen (13) performance requirements:

- Sanitary facilities;
- Food preparation and refuse disposal;
- Space and security;
- Thermal environment;
- Illumination and electricity;
- Structure and materials;
- Interior air quality;
- Water supply;
- Lead-based paint;
- Access;
- Site and neighborhood;
- Sanitary condition; and
- Smoke Detectors.

Acceptability criteria for each performance requirement help PHAs determine if the unit meets mandatory minimum standards. For some standard, specific guidance is provided to PHAs, but PHA's must rely upon inspector judgement in the areas. In some instances, family preference should be considered in the determination of acceptability.

HUD may grant approval for a PHA to use acceptability criteria variations which apply standards contained in local housing codes or other codes adopted by the PHA or because of local climatic or geographic conditions.

Acceptability criteria variations may only be approved by HUD, if the variation meets or exceeds the performance requirement and does not unduly limit the amount and type of rental, housing available at or below the fair market rent . HUD will not approve variations if the change is likely to adversely affect the health or safety of participant families or severely restrict housing choice.

PHAs should strive to ensure consistency among staff in areas requiring judgment. Not all areas of HQS are exactly defined while acceptability criteria specifically state the minimum standards necessary to meet HQS, inspector judgment or tenant preference may also need to be considered in determining whether the unit meets minimum standards or desirable. Staff can receive the tools to make sound decisions through training, access to written policy and procedures, and consistent written and oral instruction.

Potential safety hazards that are not specifically addressed in the acceptability criteria, such as damaged kitchen cabinet hardware, may present a cutting hazard to small children is an example of an area that requires judgement. Less than optimal conditions, such as a water heater with a small capacity, is another example. A good practice is to assess potential hazards based on the family residing in the unit. Some potential hazards may only apply when small children are in occupancy. Some less than perfect conditions, such as a water heater that appears too small for optimal use by the tenant, should be discussed with the tenant, but should not lead to denial of program assistance if the family is willing to accept the existing condition.

In order to keep assisted units from having to meet higher standard than units in the unassisted market, PHAs should be cautious and thoughtful when requesting HUD approval of a standard higher standard than HQS. Though adopted into local law, local codes, are often not consistently enforced among all units, or are enforced only when complaints are made. Sometimes, certain aspects of a local code are not enforced at all. If the PHA adopts local code requirements, housing choice may be restricted in these instances.

The PHA administrative plan should include any HUD-approved variations to HQS acceptability criteria that will be used to judge the condition of the unit. This practice formalizes the PHA's inspection standards for inspection staff, as well as for owners and tenants. For example, if the PHA has received HUD approval to require that assisted units must have deadbolt locks on all doors leading from the unit to the exterior or public areas, the requirement should be included in the PHA administrative plan as an addition to HQS standards.

10.3 PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS AND ACCEPTABILITY STANDARDS

Each of the 13 HQS performance requirements and acceptability criteria is identified below. A discussion of how PHAs should interpret the requirements and tenant preference options follows. Refer to the inspection checklists contained in Form HUD-52580 and Form HUD-52580-A and the *Housing Inspection Manual for the Section 8 Existing Housing Program* for more detailed explanation and guidance.

Sanitary Facilities

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit must include sanitary facilities within the unit.
- The sanitary facilities must be in proper operating condition and adequate for personal cleanliness and disposal of human waste.
- The sanitary facilities must be usable in privacy.

Acceptability Criteria

- The bathroom must be located in a separate room and have a flush toilet in proper operating condition.
- The unit must have a fixed basin (lavatory) with a sink trap and hot and cold running water in proper operating condition.
- The unit must have a shower or tub with hot and cold running water in proper operating condition.
- The facilities must utilize an approved public or private disposal system, including a locally approved septic system.

The bathroom must be contained within the dwelling unit, afford privacy (usually meaning a door, although no lock is required), and be for the exclusive use of the occupants.

All public or private waste disposal systems servicing the unit or facilities must be either state or local agency 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. The definition of hot water (temperature) required at the lavatory, tub, or shower should be determined from local health standards or applicable local code.

The PHA must determine if the bathroom facilities are free of hazards which may endanger the occupants such as damaged or broken fixtures and plumbing leaks. Conditions which do not affect the acceptability of the bathroom include tenant preference items (listed below) and minor faucets drips.

EXAMPLE:

What are bathroom hazards that may endanger occupants?

- Broken ceramic, metal, or glass fixtures that may pose a hazard. This includes towel racks, soap dishes, medicine cabinets, and mirrors as well
- A leaking hot water faucet may pose a scalding threat.

Only one bathroom is required to meet HQS. Additional bathrooms do not have to contain all plumbing fixtures (tub/shower, toilet or lavatory), but if present, they must not create any unsanitary conditions, be properly plumbed, and be free of sewer gases.

Other room standards that apply to bathroom facilities, such as illumination and electricity, are discussed under those performance requirements.

Tenant Preference

The tenant may determine acceptability of the cosmetic condition and quality of the sanitary facilities, including the size of the lavatory, tub, or shower, condition of faucets, minor leaks, scratches, or worn enamel on fixtures, and the location of the sanitary facilities within the dwelling unit.

Food Preparation and Refuse Disposal

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit must have suitable space and equipment to store, prepare, and serve food in a sanitary manner.

Acceptability Criteria

- The dwelling unit must have an oven and a stove or range. A microwave oven may be substituted for a tenant-supplied oven and stove or range. A microwave may be substituted for an owner-supplied oven and stove or range if the tenant agrees and microwave ovens are furnished to both subsidized and unsubsidized tenants in the same building or premises.
- The dwelling unit must have a refrigerator of appropriate size for the family.

- All required equipment must be in proper operating condition. According to the lease, equipment may be supplied by either the owner or the family.
- The dwelling unit must have a kitchen sink in proper operating condition, with a sink trap and hot and cold running water. The sink must drain into an approved public or private system.
- The dwelling unit must have space for storage, preparation, and serving of food.
- Facilities and services for the sanitary disposal of food waste and refuse, including temporary storage facilities where necessary, are required.

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 only if it clearly cannot serve the needs of the family. For example, a counter-top or compact type would not meet the needs of a family of four. The freezer space must be present and working, and the equipment must present an electrical hazard.

EXAMPLE:

What temperature must a refrigerator maintain to keep food from spoiling?

- Above 32° F, but generally below 40° F.
- Consider how often the refrigerator will be opened. Proper temperatures are difficult to maintain if the refrigerator is frequently opened during warm weather, door seals are removed or broken, or the door sits open.

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. The definition of hot water should be determined by the local health department or applicable local code.

Space for storage, preparation, and serving of food must be present. Built-in space, equipment, table(s), or portable storage facilities are acceptable.

Waste and refuse storage facilities are determined by local practice and may include trash cans or dumpster facilities.

Other room standards apply to the food preparation area and are discussed under those specific requirements below.

Tenant Preference

The family selects a unit with the size and type of equipment it finds acceptable and may choose to accept a microwave oven in place of a conventional oven, stove, or range if the oven/stove/range are tenant supplied or if microwaves are furnished in both subsidized and unsubsidized units in the building or premises. The amount and type of storage space, the cosmetic conditions of all equipment, and the size and location of the kitchen are all determined by the family.

Space and Security

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit must provide adequate space and security for the family.

Acceptability Criteria

- At a minimum, the dwelling unit must have a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom.
- The dwelling unit must have a least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for every two persons. Other than very young children, children of opposite sex, may not be required to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room.
- Dwelling unit windows that are accessible from the outside must be lockable.
- Exterior doors to the unit must be lockable.

A living room may be used as sleeping (bedroom) space, but no more than two persons may occupy the space.

Unit windows located on the first floor, at the basement level, on a fire escape, porch, or other outside space that can be reached from the ground and that are designed to be opened must have a locking device. (Windows with sills less than six feet off the ground are considered accessible.) Traditional window locks, those provided by storm/screen combination windows, window pins, and nails are acceptable. Windows leading to a fire escape or required to meet ventilation requirements may not be permanently nailed shut.

Doors leading to the outside and common hallways, fire escapes, and porches or otherwise accessible from the ground must have locks. No specific type of lock is required.

Window and door surfaces (including the door frame) must be in sufficient condition to support the installation and proper operation of window and door locks.

Tenant Preference

The family may determine the adequacy of room sizes and room locations. The family is also responsible for deciding the acceptability of the type of door and window locks.

Thermal Environment

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit must be able to provide a thermal environment that is healthy for the human body.

Acceptability Criteria

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

The PHA must define “a healthy living environment” for the local climate. Local or state codes will help the PHA determine when and how much heat is adequate. For example, a PHA may define a heating system capable of maintaining an interior temperature of 65° between October 1 and May 1 as adequate.

Adequate heat is required in all rooms used for living; the heat source does not have to be located in each room as long as the heat can pass to the appropriate space and meet the definition of adequate. Portable electric room heaters or kitchen stoves with built-in heating units are not acceptable as a primary source of heat for units located in climatic areas where permanent heat systems are required.

Improper operating conditions, including all conditions that may be unsafe, such as broken or damaged source vents, flues, exhausts, gas or oil lines that create a potential fire hazard or threats to health and safety are not permitted. Heating unit safety devices must be present, and the heating equipment must have proper clearance from combustible materials and location of oil storage tanks. There must be proper gas and oil connections. Local plumbing, fire, or mechanical codes are instructive in providing details about acceptable materials for furnace and water heater hookups and required clearances appropriate to the jurisdiction where units are

located. Seek assistance from local code enforcement offices to determine health and safety standards for equipment hook-up and clearance requirements.

Heating system inspections are often required by local or state authorities especially for large multi-family buildings. If the heating system has passed inspection from the inspecting authority within the past two years, the PHA may accept this as proof of heating equipment safety.

Working cooling equipment refers to a central ventilation system, evaporative cooling system, room or central air conditioning. These systems are not required by HQS, but if present, must be operating safely so as not to create a potential fire hazard or other threat to health and safety.

Tenant Preference

The PHA has no control over energy conservation measures, such as dwelling insulation or installation of storm windows and doors. The family must assess whether a dwelling without these items is acceptable; the family must take into account the cost of utilities billed to the family and personal feelings about adequate heat. Dwellings that are poorly insulated or lack storm windows are generally drafty and more difficult to heat and cool.

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 occupants can use essential electrical appliances.
- Electrical fixtures and wiring must not pose a fire hazard.

Acceptability Criteria

- 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.

The PHA must be satisfied that the electrical system is free of hazardous conditions, including: exposed, uninsulated, or frayed wires, improper connections, improper insulation or grounding of

any component of the system, overloading of capacity, or wires lying in or located near standing water or other unsafe places.

Outlets must be properly installed in the baseboard, wall, or floor. Hanging light fixtures or outlets from electric wiring, missing cover plates on switches and outlets, badly cracked outlets or cover plates, exposed fuse box connections and, overloaded circuits are unacceptable.

Tenant Preference

The family may determine whether the location and the number of outlets and fixtures (over and above those required for acceptability standards) are acceptable or if the amount of electrical service is adequate for the use of appliances, computers, or stereo equipment.

Structure and Materials

Performance Requirement

- 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.

Acceptability Criteria

- Ceilings, 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 damage.
- The roof must be structurally sound and weather-proof.
- The foundation and 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.
- Elevators must be working safely.

The PHA must examine each of the elements listed in the acceptability criteria to determine that each is structurally sound, will not collapse, and does not present a danger to residents through falling or missing parts, or tripping hazards. The PHA must determine that the unit is free from water, excessive air, and vermin infiltration.

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.

The elevator servicing the unit must be working. A current city or state inspection certificate suffices to determine working condition of the elevator.

Manufactured homes must have proper tie-down devices capable of surviving wind loads common to the area.

Tenant Preference

Families may determine whether minor defects, such as lack of paint, or worn flooring or carpeting will affect the livability of the unit.

Interior Air Quality

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit must be free of air pollutant levels that threaten the occupants' health.

Acceptability Criteria

- 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 openable 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 order.

The PHA must be satisfied that air pollutants such as gas leaks, industrial outputs, and heavy traffic would not present a health hazard.

Air circulation should be checked to determine adequate ventilation. Air conditioning (A/C) provides adequate circulation as do ceiling and vent fans.

The windows must adequately protect the unit's interior from the weather. Windows designed to open must not be painted or nailed shut. The ventilating bathroom fan in the bathroom must operate as intended.

Tenant Preference

Tenants may determine whether window and door screens, filters, fans, or other devices for proper ventilation are adequate to meet personal needs.

Water Supply

Performance Requirement

- The water supply must be free of contamination.

Acceptability Criteria

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

The PHA should be satisfied that the water supply is approved by the State or local jurisdiction.

Clean water must be distributed to all unit fixtures and waste water must leave the unit to an approved area without presence of sewer gas and backups.

Plumbing fixtures and pipes must be free of leaks and threats to health and safety.

Water-heating equipment must be installed safely and must not present any safety hazards to families. All water heaters must be free of leaks, have temperature/pressure relief valves, and a discharge line. Unless safety dividers or shields are installed water heaters must not be located in bedrooms or living areas where safety hazards may exist. Fuel burning equipment must have proper clearance from combustible materials and be properly vented.

Tenant Preference

The family may decide if the water heater has a large enough capacity for personal family use.

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.

Acceptability Criteria

- 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 inspections 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 deteriorated 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 frequented by resident children under six years of age, including play areas and child care facilities.
- For units occupied by environmental intervention blood lead level (lead poisoned) children under six years of age, a risk assessment must be conducted (paid for by the PHA), and the owner must complete hazard reduction activities if lead hazards are identified during the risk assessment.

Section 10.4 of this Chapter discusses all PHA responsibilities.

Tenant Preference

Families with children under 6 years of age have no decision-making authority related to the presence of lead-based paint.

Access

- Use and maintenance of the unit must be possible without unauthorized use of other private properties.
- The building must provide an alternate means of exit in case of fire.

Acceptability Criteria

- The unit must have private access.
- In case of fire, the building must contain an alternate means of exit such as fire stairs, or windows, including use of a ladder for windows above the second floor.

The PHA must determine that the unit has private access without unauthorized passage through another dwelling unit or private property.

The emergency (alternate) exit from the building (not the unit) may consist of fire stairs, a second door, fire ladders, or exit through windows. The emergency exit must not be blocked. It must be appropriate for the family and considered adequate by local officials. Guidance from the local fire agency is advisable.

Tenant Preference

The tenant should assist the PHA in determining if the type of emergency exit is acceptable.

Site and Neighborhood

Performance Requirement

- 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.

Acceptability Criteria

- 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 accumulations of trash, vermin, or rodent infestation, or fire hazards.

The PHA determines whether any of the above conditions seriously and continually affect the health or safety of the residents. PHAs should be careful not to restrict housing choice in deciding acceptability. Failing a unit because the neighborhood is considered “bad” is not appropriate. Take into account whether private unassisted residents are living in the same neighborhood.

Tenant Preference

Taking into consideration the type of neighborhood, presence of drug activity, commercial enterprises, and convenience to shopping and other facilities, the family selects a unit.

Sanitary Condition

Performance Requirement

- The dwelling unit and its equipment must be in sanitary condition.

Acceptability Criteria

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

The PHA must ensure that the unit is free of rodents and heavy accumulations of trash, garbage, or other debris that may harbor vermin. Infestation by mice, roaches, or other vermin particular to the climate must also be considered. The unit must have adequate barriers to prevent infestation.

EXAMPLE:

What is infestation of rodents or vermin?

- By definition infestation means more than one bug or mouse. It is easily identified by observing mouse and/or rodent droppings or gnaw marks. If no visible evidence exists, there is probably no infestation. Based on the type of pest, PHAs must decide for themselves what the limits are for determining infestation and be consistent. Is one rat or roach too much?

Tenant Preference

Provided the minimum standards required by the acceptability criteria have been met, the tenant must determine whether the unit is in an adequate sanitary condition. Occasional mice and roaches may be acceptable to the tenant.

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.

Acceptability Criteria

The PHA must insure that the location of smoke detectors conforms with local and/or State Fire Marshall's requirements.

The PHA must determine that smoke detectors are located and installed in accordance with NFPA Standards. All smoke detectors must be in operating condition.

Local codes, such as housing or fire codes, often address responsibilities between owners and tenants for installation and maintenance of smoke detector batteries. At initial, inspection smoke detectors must have good batteries and be operable. PHAs may follow local codes to determine if missing or dead smoke detector batteries constitute a tenant or owner-caused failure in occupied units.

Consultation with the local fire officials is recommended regarding acceptable types and location of smoke detectors.

Tenant Preference

The family is not permitted to exercise any tenant preference regarding smoke detector requirements.

10.4 LEAD-BASED PAINT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Regulation Background

Lead-based paint requirements were originally written to implement Section 302 of the Lead-based Paint Poisoning and Prevention Act. In the late 1970s, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 24, Part 35 was promulgated, setting forth the general procedures for inspection and treatment of defective paint surfaces in HUD assisted housing.

Under Part 35, Assistant Secretaries were given authority to develop regulations pertaining to their specific areas of responsibility, and varying program regulations were issued. The regulations have been amended several times. A major change that occurred in 1995 amended housing quality standards that applied to tenant-based programs.

New lead-based paint regulations effective September 15, 2000 have been implemented to incorporate Title X of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992. These regulations consolidate all lead-based paint requirements under one section of the Code of Federal Regulations (24 CFR Part 35), stress identification of lead-paint hazards, notification to occupants of the existence of these hazards, and control of lead-based paint hazards to reduce lead poisoning among young children.

Housing choice voucher program units are subject to the following subparts of 24 CFR Part 35:

- Subpart A, Disclosure;
- Subpart B, General Lead-Based Paint Requirements and Definitions for All Programs;
- Subpart M, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance; and
- Subpart R, Methods and Standards for Performing Lead Hazard Evaluation and Reduction Activities.

The Section 8 moderate rehabilitation program and the project-based housing choice voucher or certificate program units are subject to requirements under 24 CFR Subparts A, B, H, and R. Those requirements are not discussed in this Guidebook.

Exempt Units

Exempt housing includes:

- Units built after December 31, 1977;
- Zero (0) bedroom and SRO units;
- Housing built for the elderly or persons with disabilities, unless a child of under age six (6) resides or is expected to reside in such housing;
- Property for which a paint inspection was completed in accordance with the new regulations and certified to have no lead-based paint;
- Property in which all lead-based paint was identified, was removed, and received clearance in accordance with the new regulations.

For dwellings built before January 1, 1978, *and* occupied or to be occupied by assisted families with one or more children under age six, lead-based paint requirements apply to:

- The unit interior and exterior paint surfaces associated with the assisted unit; and
- The common areas servicing the unit, including those areas through which residents must pass to gain access to the unit, and other areas frequented by resident children less than six such as play areas, and child care facilities. Common areas also include garages and fences on the assisted property.

Basic Lead-Based Paint Requirements

The PHA is the responsible party for the following activities:

- Visual assessment for deteriorated paint (i.e., peeling, chipping, flaking) surfaces at initial and annual inspections;
- Assuring that clearance examination is conducted when required;
- Carrying out special requirements for children under age six who have environmental intervention blood lead levels as verified by a medical health care provider;
- Collecting data from the local health department on program participants under age six who have identified environmental intervention blood lead levels; and
- Record keeping.

Unit owners have responsibilities to:

- Disclose known lead-based paint hazards to all potential residents prior to execution of a lease;
- The owner must also provide all prospective families with a copy of *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home* or other EPA approved document;
- When necessary, perform paint stabilization to correct deteriorated paint;
- Each time such an activity is performed, notify tenants about the conduct of lead hazard reduction activities and clearance (if required);
- Conduct lead hazard reduction activities when required by the PHA;
- Perform all work in accordance with HUD prescribed safe work practices and conduct clearance activities when required; and
- Perform ongoing maintenance. As part of ongoing maintenance, the owner must provide written notice to each assisted family asking occupants to report deteriorated paint. The notice must include the name, address, and phone number of the person responsible for accepting the occupant's complaint.

10.5 NOTIFICATION AND DISCLOSURE OF LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARDS PRIOR TO OCCUPANCY

Before the execution of the lease the owner or owner's agent is required to disclose any knowledge of lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards in housing built prior to 1978, to all prospective residents (See Exhibit 10-1, *Sample Disclosure Notice*.) The PHA must keep a copy of the disclosure notice executed by the owner and tenant in the tenant file. The owner should not send the PHA the original disclosure notice executed by the owner and tenant.

Visual Assessment for Deteriorated Paint

During the conduct of initial and annual inspections of pre-1978 units that are occupied or will be occupied by families with children under 6 years of age, the PHA must conduct a visual inspection for deteriorated paint surfaces at these locations:

- All unit interior and exterior painted surfaces associated with the assisted unit; and
- Common areas such as common hallways, access and egress areas, playgrounds, child-care facilities, or other areas including fences and garages frequented by children under age six.

Deteriorated paint surfaces are defined as interior or exterior paint or other coating that is peeling, chipping, flaking, cracking, is otherwise damaged or has separated from the substrate of the surface or fixture.

The inspection may be conducted by an HQS inspector or other party designated by the PHA, but all inspectors must be trained in visual assessment in accordance with procedures established by HUD. A visual assessment training course is available on the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control's website.

Stabilization of Deteriorated Paint Surfaces

When the visual inspector identifies deteriorated paint surfaces, the PHA must notify and require the owner to perform stabilization of the surfaces within thirty (30) days of notification in occupied units and before commencement of an assisted tenancy. When weather conditions prevent stabilization of deteriorated paint surfaces on exterior surfaces within 30-day period, stabilization may be delayed for a reasonable time.

Owner requirements for compliance with a PHA's paint stabilization notice differ, depending upon the amount of deteriorated paint surface to be corrected. The use of lead-safe work practices during paint stabilization activities are characterized as above or below de minimis levels. De minimis deteriorated paint surfaces are as follows:

- 20 square feet on exterior surfaces;
- 2 square feet on an interior surface in a single room or interior space; or
- 10 percent of individual small components (e.g., window skills) on the interior or exterior.

Owners must perform paint stabilization on all deteriorated paint surfaces *regardless of the size of the deteriorated surface*. Paint stabilization is defined as:

- Repair of any physical defect in the substrate of the painted surface or building component. Examples of defective substrate conditions include dry-rot, rust, moisture-related defects, crumbling plaster, missing siding, or other components not securely fastened;
- Removal of all loose paint and other loose material from the surface being treated; and
- Application of a new protective coat of paint to the stabilized surface.

If the amount of deteriorated paint is below the de minimis level, the owner must perform paint stabilization. Owners are not required to perform lead-safe work practices and clearance.

Correction of deteriorated paint above de minimis levels requires owners to perform additional activities to gain compliance with HUD lead-based paint requirements, including:

- Conducting the stabilization activities with trained staff;
- Employing acceptable methods for preparing the surface to be treated, including wet scraping, wet sanding, and power sanding performed in conjunction with a HEPA filtered local exhaust attachment operated according to manufacturer's instruction;
- Dry sanding and dry scraping is not permitted except within one (1) square foot of electrical outlets.
- Protecting the occupants and their belongings from contamination;
- Notifying the occupants within fifteen (15) calendar days of the stabilization activity and providing the results of the clearance examination (See Exhibit 10-3, *Summary Notice of Completion of Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Activity*); and
- HUD has provided funds to PHAs to cover the cost of the first clearance examination. The owner covers funds for the cost of subsequent tests.
- The PHA is responsible for clearance activities. Clearance examinations must be performed by persons who have EPA or state-approved training and are licensed or certified to perform clearance examinations.

In no instance may an owner employ any paint stabilization methods that are strictly prohibited by federal, state, or local law such as:

- Open flame burning and torching;
- Machine-sanding or grinding without a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) local exhaust control;
- Heat guns operating above 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit;
- Abrasive blasting or sandblasting without HEPA exhaust control;
- Dry sanding and scraping except limited conditions stated above for limited areas; and
- Paint stripping in poorly ventilated space using a volatile stripper or a hazardous chemical as defined by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Failure to comply with paint stabilization requirements, regardless of the amount of deteriorated surface, results in disapproval of the tenancy, abatement of payment to the owner, and/or termination of the HAP contract. The HQS violation for paint stabilization is considered closed when the PHA receives an executed copy of the Lead Based Paint Owner's Certification. (See Exhibit 10-2, *Sample Certification*.)