

Chapter 7: HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (HQS)

7.1: Move-In Inspection

The LAA shall have on staff an individual who holds a valid certificate as a Housing Quality Standards Inspector, as covered under 24 CFR Part 982. An HQS inspection must be conducted by an HQS trained inspector or co-signed by an HQS trained inspector prior to a tenant moving into a unit. A Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract (Form F6: HAP Contract) will not be entered into between the landlord and LAA for units that fail to meet HQS at Move-In inspection.

All initial inspections should be conducted with the landlord or management agent present.

The HQS Long Form 52580-A must be utilized on initial inspections (Move-In and Unit Transfer inspections). See Form F10.1 HQS Long Form.

7.2: Annual Inspection

At least annually, HQS inspections must be conducted for all SPC subsidized units. If the unit fails the annual HQS inspection, the landlord or tenant will be given 30 days to correct the deficiencies. The landlord, tenant and service providers will be given written notification of any deficiencies and a re-inspection must be scheduled prior to the 30th day to determine compliance. If deficiencies represent an immediate danger (life threatening) to the household's health and safety, the failed item(s) must be corrected within 24 hours. The HAP will not be paid for units that fail to meet HQS unless the owner corrects any deficiencies and the LAA verifies that all deficiencies have been corrected within 30 days from the date of the inspection. If the deficiency is a life-threatening condition and is not corrected within 24 hours, the LAA must withhold the HAP. The HAP must be withheld on the first of the month following the failure to comply. If the deficiency(ies) has not been made by the 60th day following the annual inspection, the tenant must find another unit which meets HQS to continue on the program (See Section 10.1: Extensions for the policy on extensions).

The HQS Short Form 52580 (Form F9) may be utilized after the initial inspection, that is, on subsequent annual inspections. The short form should also be utilized for re-inspections resulting from special HQS inspection requests made by persons including but not limited to: the SPC recipient, landlord, caseworkers, or other service and/or housing providers.

7.3: Move-Out Inspection

An HQS inspection must be conducted to determine the condition of the unit as soon as possible after a tenant moves out of a unit. This will aid in determining if the unit sustained damage since the move-in or last annual HQS inspection, or if the unit has sustained wear and tear beyond what would be considered normal for the period of time the tenant occupied the unit. The determination of normal

wear and tear should be based upon the condition of the unit at time of move-in or improvements made to the unit during the tenancy. See Form F10: Move-Out Inspection.

7.4: Lead Paint

Lead is a toxin that can be especially harmful to children under the age of 6. Before the risk to young children was known, it was used in many products (ex. before 1978 it was found in paint). Paint bought today does not have lead in it; however older houses often still have old lead paint. Lead dust from old paint is the most common way children get lead poisoning. See Appendix 11: *Protect Your Family in your Home Brochure*.

To learn more about Lead Paint and what you can do about it please visit the Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention website:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/eohp/lead/>

Also, visit HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH):

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/healthy_homes

Please note that specific URL links are updated independently from the SPC program and are subject to change.

7.5: Radon

Radon, a colorless, odorless gas, is the second leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move up into a house from the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air inside. Radon gas can also dissolve into well water, which is then released into the air when you use the water. Simple air and well water tests can show whether home radon levels meet state and national safety guidelines.

For more information about Radon and what you can do to protect yourself, please visit the Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention's website on Radon:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/rad/radon/hp-radon.htm>

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Appendix A13: Radon FAQ is also a resource that can be used for information on Rental Building Radon Testing.

7.6: Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a gas that can cause sickness, coma or death when it builds up in enclosed spaces. It is not seen, does not smell and cannot be tasted. Warning signs of poisoning include headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness, and confusion, but no fever. Carbon monoxide exposure results in over 100 emergency department visits each year in Maine. Every home in Maine should have a carbon monoxide detector - about half of Maine homes do not have a carbon monoxide detector. For more information about Carbon Monoxide please visit www.maine.gov. The following websites are helpful resources:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/eohp/air/co.htm>

AND

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/eohp/air/documents/cotipsheet.pdf>

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