



August 14, 2017

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Dear Housing Partner,

The Housing Authority of the City of Tampa's Assisted Housing Department currently manages over 9,000 rental assistance vouchers throughout the Hillsborough County area. As we continue to strive to increase efficiencies and performance, THA has adopted policies that inevitably will be beneficial to the agency, client and owner. The two policy changes are centered on Housing Quality Standards Inspections.

INITIAL INSPECTIONS

As a result of the Housing Opportunities Through Modernization Act, Housing Authorities may choose to approve an assisted tenancy, execute the HAP contract, and begin making housing assistance payments on a unit that **fails** the initial Housing Quality Standard inspection, provided the unit's failure to meet HQS is the result only of **non-life-threatening conditions**, as such conditions are defined by HUD and listed below.

If the unit fails the initial HQS inspection for non-life threatening issues only, with the agreement of the family, THA may approve the assisted tenancy, execute the HAP contract, and make housing assistance payments. If the non-life threatening conditions are not corrected within 30 days of the PHA notifying the owner of the unit, in writing, of the unit's failure to comply with HQS, the PHA must withhold any further assistance payments until those conditions are addressed and the unit is in compliance with the housing quality standards. After the 30-day correction period and the unit has not passed the inspection, the PHA will begin abatement the first of the following month after the failed inspection and will notify the family of the requirement to move.

Any withheld payments will be paid retroactively to the owner. Abated payments will not be paid retroactively.

If the initial inspection on the unit identifies one or more non-life-threatening deficiencies, the family will receive a list of the deficiencies and offer the family the opportunity to decline to enter into the assisted lease without losing the voucher. THA will notify the family that if the owner fails to correct the non-life-threatening deficiencies within the PHA-specified time period, the PHA will terminate the HAP contract, which in turn terminates the assisted lease, and the family will have to move to another unit in order to receive voucher assistance.

Example:

Initial inspection failed for weather stripping June 5th, 2017. THA notifies the family of the deficiency with the option of moving into the unit now or waiting until the weather stripping has been repaired. Tenant opts to move into the unit. THA notifies the owner that the weather stripping must be corrected within 30 days of the date of notification. For this scenario the re-inspection date will be July 15th (30 days of the date of the letter). THA re-inspects the unit but the owner did not make the repair. THA will withhold payments effective August 1st. If the unit does not pass, then the unit will be abated September 1st and family will be required to move if continued assistance is desire.

If the unit passes an inspection, then the withheld payment for August will be reimbursed to the owner.

Below is the HUD definition of life-threatening conditions:

Life-Threatening Conditions HUD is defining a nonlife-threatening condition as any condition that would fail to meet the housing quality standards under 24 CFR 982.401 and is not a life-threatening condition. Further, for the purposes of implementing the policy outlined by HOTMA, HUD is defining life-threatening conditions as follows and applies to all HQS inspections:

- (1) Gas (natural or liquid petroleum) leak or fumes. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) A fuel storage vessel, fluid line, valve, or connection that supplies fuel to a HVAC unit is leaking; or (b) a strong gas odor detected with potential for explosion or fire, or that results in health risk if inhaled.
- (2) Electrical hazards that could result in shock or fire. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) A light fixture is readily accessible, is not securely mounted to the ceiling or wall, and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (b) a light fixture is hanging by its wires; (c) a light fixture has a missing or broken bulb, and the open socket is readily accessible to the tenant during the day to day use of the unit; (d) a receptacle (outlet) or switch is missing or broken and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (e) a receptacle (outlet) or switch has a missing or damaged cover plate and electrical connections or wires are exposed; (f) an open circuit breaker position is not appropriately blanked off in a panel board, main panel board, or other electrical box that contains circuit breakers or fuses; (g) a cover is missing from any electrical device box, panel box, switch gear box, control panel, etc., and there are exposed electrical connections; (h) any nicks, abrasions, or fraying of the insulation that expose conducting wire; (i) exposed bare wires or electrical connections; (j) any condition that results in openings in electrical panels or electrical control device enclosures; (k) water leaking or ponding near any electrical device; or (l) any condition that poses a serious risk of electrocution or fire and poses an immediate life-threatening condition.
- (3) Inoperable or missing smoke detector. A life-threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) the smoke detector is missing; or (b) the smoke detector does not function as it should.
- (4) Interior air quality. A life threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) the carbon monoxide detector is missing; or (b) the carbon monoxide detector does not function as it should.
- (5) Gas/oil fired water heater or heating, ventilation, or cooling system with missing, damaged, improper, or misaligned chimney or venting. A life threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) The chimney or venting system on a fuel fired water heater is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged, which may cause improper or dangerous venting of gases; (b) a gas dryer vent is missing, damaged, or is visually determined to be inoperable, or the dryer exhaust is not vented to the outside; (c) a fuel fired space heater is not properly vented or lacks available combustion air; (d) a non-vented space heater is present; (e) safety devices on a fuel fired space heater are missing or damaged; or (f) the chimney or venting system on a fuel fired heating, ventilation, or cooling system is misaligned, negatively pitched, or damaged which may cause improper or dangerous venting of gases.
- (6) Lack of alternative means of exit in case of fire or blocked egress. A life threatening condition under this standard is one of the following: (a) Any of the components that affect the function of the fire escape are missing or damaged; (b) stored items or other barriers restrict or prevent the use of the fire escape in the event of an emergency; or (c) the building's emergency exit is blocked or impeded, thus limiting the ability of occupants to exit in a fire or other emergency.

(7) Other interior hazards. A life threatening condition under this standard is a fire extinguisher (where required) that is missing, damaged, discharged, overcharged, or expired.

(8) Deteriorated paint, as defined by 24 CFR 35.110, in a unit built before 1978 that is to be occupied by a family with a child under 6 years of age. This is a life-threatening condition only for the purpose of a condition that would prevent a family from moving into the unit. All lead hazard reduction requirements in 24 CFR part 35, including the timeline for lead hazard reduction procedures, still apply.

(9) Any other condition subsequently identified by HUD as life threatening in a notice published in the Federal Register. HUD will notify PHAs if such changes are made.

(10) Any other condition identified by the administering PHA as life threatening in the PHA's administrative plan prior to this notice taking effect and are as follows:

Lack of security for the unit

Waterlogged ceiling in imminent danger of falling

Major plumbing leaks or flooding

No heat when outside temperature is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit and temperature inside unit is below 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Utilities not in service

No running hot water

Broken glass where someone could be injured

Lack of functioning toilet

If the unit fails for any item listed above under local repair item and life threatening conditions, the unit will be considered as an HQS fail and must pass an HQS inspection to be eligible to receive housing assistance payments.

BIENNIAL INSPECTIONS

Currently units are inspected annually to ensure HQS compliance. Effective October 1st, 2017 THA will schedule units on a biennial basis if at the annual HQS inspection the unit passes the **first time**.

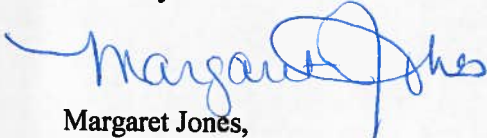
Example: Unit A is scheduled for the annual HQS inspection and the first visit to the unit is May 1st 2017. At the first visit, the unit passes the inspection; therefore, the unit would not be re-inspected until May 2019.

Unit B is scheduled for an annual HQS inspection June 1st. The unit did not pass the HQS inspection the first time; therefore, the unit is not eligible for the biennial inspection and must be re-inspected the following year.

MEETING

To learn more about the changes effective for October 1st, 2017 and other proposed HUD changes, a meeting has been scheduled at the Housing Authority's main office located at 5301 West Cypress Street Tampa, FL 33607 for September 21st, 2017 at 6 pm. Please RSVP for the meeting by sending an email to Margaret.Jones@thafl.com or call me at 813 253-0551 ext. 1470.

Sincerely



Margaret Jones,
Director, Assisted Housing