

## HUD HQS Inspection Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who will inspect my unit?**

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino contracts with an outside organization to conduct all HUD inspections – Reliant Asset Management Solutions also known as Reliant Inspections. All the inspectors are trained and certified to conduct HQS inspections.

### **How long does it take to get an initial inspection?**

When a correct and complete Request for Tenancy Approval packet (RFTA) is submitted to the Housing Authority, it can take up to 7 days to process the packet. Once the RFTA packet is approved Reliant Inspections will schedule the initial inspection within 7 days. Submitting incomplete or incorrect information on the RFTA packet will delay this process. Initial inspections will be schedule by phone.

### **Do all utilities have to be turned on during the initial inspection?**

Water, Gas and Electricity services are required to be turned on during the scheduled inspection. HQS inspection standards check for properly operating gas and electric appliances, hot/cold water, leaks, properly functioning lights and outlets, and several other areas that can only be properly tested with these 3 utilities turned on. If 1 or more of these utilities are turned off for the inspection, it will have to be rescheduled for a later date since the inspector cannot complete the inspection.

### **Can I finish repairs or install appliances after the tenant moves in?**

No. The unit needs to be “move-in” ready for the initial inspection. If there are unfinished repairs or missing owner-provided appliances, the unit will fail inspection. If there are too many fail items or the unit is not ready for the inspection, the inspector will stop the inspection and it will not be rescheduled until the unit is ready.

### **How often will my unit be inspected?**

Units will be inspected before move in and at least every 12 months or 24 months, depending on which program the participant is enrolled.

### **How will I be notified of a scheduled inspection?**

The inspection notice letters will be mailed approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the scheduled inspection date. Except for initial (move-in) inspections, these will be scheduled over the phone. Please keep mailing addresses and phone numbers current and send any updates or changes in writing.

### **Do I have to be there for the inspection?**

It is the shared responsibility of the tenant and landlord to ensure someone over the age of 18 is present for inspection. After receiving the inspection notice contact the tenant to arrange for someone to be present on the day of the inspection.

## **What is the inspector looking for during an inspection?**

There are 13 key areas covered by HQS inspections:

- Sanitary Facilities
- Food Preparation and refuse disposal
- Space and security
- Illumination and electricity
- Thermal environment
- Structure and Materials
- Interior Air Quality
- Water supply
- Lead-Based paint
- Access
- Smoke Alarms
- Site and neighborhood
- Sanitary conditions

Additional HQS inspection resources can be found on our website in the lower right section of the owner's/landlord's tab – [www.hacsb.com/landlords](http://www.hacsb.com/landlords)

## **What is the difference between HUD inspection standards and Local inspection standards?**

HUD establishes the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) at a national level to be used by all housing authorities. Each Housing Authority can adopt additional inspection standards (i.e. local) once the changes are detailed in the Housing Authority's Administrative Plan. For example, areas prone to earthquakes require water heaters to have earthquake straps securing the tank to the wall.

## **Will I receive a letter if the inspection passes?**

No, in order to conserve resources, the Housing Authority does not mail letters for a passed inspection. The inspector will notify the participant of the pass/fail status at the end of the inspection.

## **If my unit fails inspection, how long will I have to make the repairs?**

The second inspection will be scheduled about 2-3 weeks after the first inspection. The second inspection notice will be mailed to both tenant and landlord and will contain the complete list of failed items and the next scheduled inspection date.

## **Who is responsible to fix the items that fail?**

It is the shared responsibility of the landlord and tenant to address the failed items. All failed items will have a designated responsible party. Since the inspectors do not know the original condition of the unit or the specifics of the lease agreement, a majority of failed items will be designated as owner's responsibility. This is not meant to designate financial responsibility, but rather indicate that the owner can enforce the lease agreement when addressing the failed items. For example, if the owner is designated as responsible to address a broken bedroom door, the owner can choose to repair and pay for the door, charge the tenant for the repair or have the tenant repair the door. Either way, all failed items on the inspection results letter will need to be corrected prior to the scheduled inspection date.

## **What happens if my unit fails inspection twice?**

A unit that fails inspection twice for the same failed items will enter abatement the first of the month following the second failed inspection. The number of same-fail items (or even if there are new-fail items found along with same-fail items) does not change the fact that the unit will enter abatement on the first day of the following month.

## **What does it mean when a unit is in abatement?**

A unit is abated for one (1) month starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following the second failed inspection. During abatement the Housing Authority Payment (HAP) is withheld from the owner. The tenant is still required to pay their portion of rent, but is not responsible for any of the rental portion that is withheld as long as there is a valid contract in place. Under the Housing Authority contract with the owner/landlord the payment will be withheld for a unit that is not in compliance with HQS standards (2 failed inspections). The Housing Authority cannot pay for a unit while it is not in

compliance, meaning payments will only resume once the HQS inspection passes and payments will not be made retroactively. Payments will resume on a pro-rated basis beginning on the date of the passed inspection.

### **What is a Quality Control Inspection?**

A Quality Control inspection is performed within 90 days of the identified inspection. It is a measure required by HUD in order to maintain consistency across inspectors and to identify internal training needs. Only about 3% of units inspected each month are selected for a QC inspection. They are selected using a random number method. Participants and landlords cannot opt out of QC inspections.

### **Does the Housing Authority Conduct move-out inspections?**

No, the contract ends when the tenant vacates the unit so the Housing Authority cannot enforce the terms of the contract (i.e. inspections). Inspections are conducted in order to start a contract or when the tenant is occupying the unit under a valid contract.

### **What is an emergency or 24-hour fail?**

There are specific items and/or conditions that HUD defines as hazardous to health and safety. If these items are identified during an HQS inspection, the inspector is required to return within 24 hours to check the status of the emergency fail item(s) only. Here is a list of the items or conditions that will result in a 24-hour failed inspection:

#### **24-hour fail items:**

- Lack of security for unit
- Ceiling in imminent danger of falling
- Major plumbing leaks or flooding
- Gas leak or fumes
- Electrical problem that could cause shock or fire
- No heat when weather dictates
- Utilities turned off, (will be marked tenant or owner responsibility)
- No hot water
- Broken glass where it can cause injury
- Obstacle prevent tenant entrance or exit
- No functioning toilet in the unit
- No working smoke or CO detector on each floor
- Any other life threatening issue cited by other agencies with jurisdiction

The Inspector will attempt to contact the owner/agent while at the unit to inform him/her of the 24-hour fail item(s) and the need to return the next day. If the 24-hour fail items are not corrected by the second inspection, the unit will be abated starting the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month after the second failed inspection.