

Harrisburg Housing Authority  
Housing Choice Voucher Program  
Summary of Housing Quality Standards

The following is a summary of standards required for compliance with 24 CFR Part 982, The Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook reference 7420, The International Property Maintenance Code and the minimum requirements set forth by the City of Harrisburg Bureau of Codes Enforcement. It is not intended to replace or alter the requirements of those standards and one should refer to those standards for a complete compliance with Federal, State and City requirements.

Some dwellings may exceed the required Housing Quality Standards. However, dwelling units meeting less than the Housing Quality Standards will not be allowed to participate in the program, unless the housing is altered to meet the criteria within the required timeframe.

## **Exterior**

### **Foundation:**

**Foundation** should be sound and free from hazards. All foundation walls shall be maintained plumb and free from open cracks and breaks and shall be kept in such condition to prevent air infiltration or vermin infestation.

### **Stairs, Rails and Porches:**<sup>1</sup>

**Exterior Stairs** and rails shall be in maintained in good condition, structurally sound and capable of supporting the imposed load. Stairs having four or more risers shall have a handrail on one side of stairway. Every open portion of a stair, landing, balcony, porch, deck, ramp or other walking surface which is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade shall have guards.

**Guardrails** shall not be less than 30 inches high above the floor of the landing, balcony, porch, deck or ramp or other walking surface.

**Handrails** shall not be less than 30 inches high or more than 42 inches high measured vertically above the nosing of the tread or above the finished floor of the landing or walking surface.

**Premises identification**<sup>2</sup> requires buildings to place approved address numbers in a plain view from the street fronting the property. Numbers shall contrast with their background and be a minimum of 4 inches high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inch.

**Walkways** shall be kept in a proper state of repair and maintained free from hazardous conditions.

### **Condition of Roofs and Gutters:**<sup>3</sup>

**Gutters** and downspouts shall be maintained in good repair and free from obstructions. Roof water shall not be discharged in a manner that creates a public nuisance.

<sup>1</sup> International Property Maintenance Code® Section 306 Handrails and Guardrails 306.1 General

<sup>2</sup> International Property Maintenance Code® Section 304 Exterior Structure [F] 304.3 Premises identification

<sup>3</sup> International Property Maintenance Code® Section 304.7 Roofs and drainage

**Roof and flashing** shall be sound and weather tight. The roof should not allow rain to enter the dwelling.

**Chimney**<sup>4</sup> and similar appurtenances attached shall be maintained structurally safe, sound and in good repair. All exposed surfaces of metal or wood shall be protected from the elements and against decay or rust by periodic application of weather coating materials such as paint or similar surface treatment.

**All surfaces** shall be free of holes, cracks, and broken or deteriorated materials. Finishes shall be free of peeling, flaking, excessively weathered or damaged areas. Exterior protective and decorative finish coating shall provide adequate resistance to weathering, moisture, corrosion, and reasonable durability.

### **Entrance Doors and Windows:**

**Entrance Doors** from the exterior must have door assemblies and hardware that is maintained in good condition.

**Doors and frames** on exterior entrances must be weather tight.

**Locks** at all entrances to dwelling unit shall tightly secure the door. Locks shall comply with egress requirements as delineated by that section.

**Windows** and window frames must be maintained in sound condition and weather tight. All windows shall be of a thermo pane construction or have storm windows installed.

**Insect screens** shall be provided on all operable windows except where conflicting requirements forbid the installation. (Such as requirements for Historical Preservation)

**Windows**, other than a fixed window, shall be easily openable and capable of being held in position by window hardware. Glazing materials shall be maintained free from cracks and holes.

**Operable windows** located within six foot of the ground or any walk able surface shall be equipped with a locking device.

## **Interior**

### **General Information & Habitable Rooms:**

**Each dwelling** unit providing living facilities for an individual or family must contain a separate kitchen and bathroom. Access to each living unit shall be provided without passing through any other living unit.

**Complete bathing and sanitary facilities** provided within each living unit shall consist of a water closet, a tub, and a lavatory at least 17" x 20", and an adequate supply of hot water to the

<sup>4</sup> International Property Maintenance Code® Section 304.11 Chimney and towers

tub and lavatory, and cold water to all fixtures. The arrangement of fixtures shall provide for the comfortable use of each fixture and permit a full 90° door swing.

**All bathrooms** shall have an operable window or an exhaust fan vented to the outside to provide adequate ventilation.

**Bathrooms** shall be equipped with a medicine cabinet, mirror, towel bar and a toilet paper holder. The bathroom shall be accessible from the common hall, except in the 1-bedroom unit. The sanitary facilities must be usable in privacy.

**Bedrooms** shall not be less than 100 square feet of floor space and shall not be less than 7 feet in any dimension or used as the only means of access to another habitable room.

**Interior doors** shall be provided for each opening to a bedroom and bathroom with a privacy lock on the bathroom.

**Clothes-closet** space shall be provided at a minimum of 4 square feet per person and are required in or in the vicinity of each bedroom. A shelf and hanging rod is required and preferably not less than 2 feet deep.

**Floors** should provide safe and adequate support for normally imposed loads. Flooring should be free of objectionable vibration or give. Finished floors should be appropriate to use of space, and in good condition. Floors may be covered with carpeting or other suitable covering. Bare floors are acceptable but should be smooth and painted with wood floor paint.

**Each living unit**<sup>5</sup> shall have a separate kitchen space with a sink at least 18” x 22” and an adequate supply of hot and cold water. Owner supplied stove and refrigerator must be of appropriate size, clean and in good working condition. Adequate storage shelves and drawers (see table) must be provided for food preparation and storage.

<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Aggregate Counter Dimensions</b>	<b>Refrigerator Cubic Feet</b>	<b>Storage Shelves Square Feet</b>	<b>Drawer Square Feet</b>	<b>4-Burner Stove w/Oven</b>
1	6' x 22"	12	12	5	20 Inches
2	7" x 22"	12	14	5	24 Inches
3	8' x 22"	14	16	10	30 Inches
4 & up	8" x 22"	14	18	10	30 Inches

**The minimum ceiling height** for habitable rooms, bathrooms, hallways, kitchens and laundry areas shall be no less than 7feet.

Laundry areas in unfinished basements shall have at least 6 foot 4 inches of headroom to access the facilities.

**All stairways** shall provide safe ascent and descent, railing protection and be in sound condition. The stairs and stairway shall be arranged to permit adequate headroom and space for the passage of furniture and equipment.

**Handrails and guardrails** shall be provided as described in the exterior portion of this standard

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<sup>5</sup> Harrisburg Housing Authority’s criteria of acceptable space for storage, preparation and serving of food. This decisive factor is supported by the Section 8 Admin Plan

**All interior walls and ceilings** will provide a surface without major irregularities, peeling, flaking or cracked finishes. Where the finish in bathrooms and kitchens is painted it shall be gloss, semi gloss or eggshell.

**Basement** and foundation walls shall be watertight.

**The property** shall not be subject to hazards such as objectionable smoke, noxious odors, unusual noise or constant flooding.

The owner shall disclose to the tenant historical information regarding flood levels if property is located within the 100 year flood zone.

## **Heating & Plumbing Requirements**

**Heat**<sup>6</sup> shall be provided for each living unit. Heating equipment shall be capable of producing and maintaining inside temperature of 68° F when the outside temperature reaches 0 F. The heat source shall be safe and convenient to operate, be economical in performance and quiet in operation. The heat for a dwelling unit shall not be supplied by unvented room heaters that burn gas, oil, kerosene or any other fuel. This does not apply to fixed electric heat sources.

**Plumbing systems** shall operate freely and not have cross connections which permit contamination of water supply or backsiphonage between fixtures.

**Every plumbing stack**, vent, waste and sewer line shall function properly and be kept free from obstruction, leaks and defects.

**Plumbing fixtures** shall be properly connected to either a public sewer system or to an approved private sewage disposal system.

**Domestic water heater**<sup>7</sup> shall be in good serviceable condition and shall have a minimum capacity of 30 gallons for up to a 3-bedroom unit and 40 gallons for a 4-bedroom and above. The heater shall be capable of providing water at not less than 110° F.

**A gas-burning water heater** shall not be located in any bathroom, toilet room, bedroom or other occupied room normally kept closed, unless adequate combustion air is provided. An approved combination temperature and pressure-relief valve and relief valve discharge pipe shall be properly installed and maintained on water heaters.

## **Electrical Requirements**

**Existing wiring** and electrical equipment for dwellings shall conform to the minimum city electrical requirements of the City of Harrisburg Bureau of Codes Enforcement.

**All new wiring** and equipment in existing dwellings and all wiring and equipment in new or substantially rehabilitated dwellings shall comply with the current version of the National Electrical Code.

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<sup>6</sup> Harrisburg Housing Authority's criteria of acceptable degree of heat needed for a healthy thermal environment. This decisive factor is supported by the Section 8 Admin Plan

<sup>7</sup> Harrisburg Housing Authority's criterion of acceptable supply of hot water is based on bedroom size requirement. This decisive factor is supported by the Section 8 Admin Plan.

**Proof of compliance** shall be evidenced by the certification of inspection by a third party code inspection agency.

**Properties** enrolled in the Housing Choice Voucher Program shall at a minimum have the following:

- Two separate 20 amp branch appliance circuits shall be installed to serve each kitchen countertop.
- All existing countertop receptacles within 6 feet of a kitchen sink or wet bar shall have ground fault interruption. All new countertop receptacles shall have ground fault protection.
- Enough general lighting circuits shall be installed to provide a minimum of three (3) watts per square foot of floor space.
- Every habitable room shall have a minimum of one switch operated light fixture and two duplex receptacles or two duplex receptacles, one to be switch operated.
- Every room shall have a wall switch at one point of entry.
- All grounding type receptacles shall be grounded. Exception: Ground fault protected receptacles when installed in accordance with 406.3 of the National Electrical Code
- Bathrooms shall have a ground fault protected receptacle installed adjacent to the lavatory.
- Any exposed knob and tube wiring that is connected and active shall be removed if damaged or deteriorated.

A complete version of the minimum electrical requirements may be obtained from City of Harrisburg Bureau of Codes Enforcement.

### **Safety Items:**

**Smoke Detectors** are required on each level of the dwelling including the basement. The power shall be supplied by the building wiring, have battery backup and be interconnected. Exception: In existing dwellings that have not undergone a substantial rehabilitation that resulted in the removal of interior finishes, they may be solely battery operated and are not required to be interconnected.

### **Lead Paint**

**Housing built before 1978** may contain lead-based paint. Lead from paint, paint chips and dust can pose health hazards if not properly managed. Lead exposure is especially harmful to young children and pregnant women. Before renting pre – 1978 housing, lessors must disclose the presence of lead – based paint and/or lead – based paint hazards in the dwelling. Lessees must also receive a federally approved pamphlet on lead poisoning prevention. Pamphlets and disclosure statement forms are available from the Housing Choice Voucher Program Agent. Compliance with this requirement shall be in accordance with 24 CFR part 35. All surfaces shall be maintained free of cracking, scaling, peeling, chipping and loose paint, or adequately treated or covered to prevent exposure to lead based paint hazards. Stabilization of deteriorated paint surfaces shall be preformed in accordance with the requirements of 24 CFR Part 35 Subpart R and as detailed in the Housing Choice Voucher Program Guidebook.

## **Egress Requirements**

**A safe continuous unobstructed path** of travel shall be provided from any point in the building to the public way.

**Locked doors:** All means of egress doors shall be readily opened without the use of keys or tools. Double sided keyed locks do not meet the requirement of this section.

**Emergency Escape Openings:** Required emergency escape openings shall be maintained in accordance with the code in effect at the time of construction and the following. Windows in habitable rooms and sleeping areas, where required for emergency egress, shall not be obstructed by the use of grills, grates, bars, air conditioners or similar devices unless approved release hardware is provided. No emergency opening shall require the use of keys or tools to open from the inside.

## **Closing Comments**

Existing structures shall be maintained in accordance with the code that was applicable at the time of construction and the minimum requirements as delineated by the aforementioned standards. New work shall be performed in accordance with the applicable code as set forth by the Uniform Construction Code of the State of Pennsylvania and the International Code Council.

Notwithstanding the foregoing specifications and requirements, all properties will comply with local ordinances, codes and regulations, including established requirements of city health department or other authority having jurisdiction. Properties submitted for participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program will be subject to eligibility certification from the City of Harrisburg. The City of Harrisburg's Operation and Revenue Department status report indicates eligibility with current Rental, Buyer Notification Inspection or Certificate of Occupancy.

Participation and execution of a Housing Assistance Payment Contract will not be authorized prior to compliance with the Housing Quality Standards. Housing Assistance Payments are not permitted on behalf of an eligible applicant/occupant until the living unit is determined by the Harrisburg Housing Authority to be in compliance with the Housing Choice Voucher Program Housing Quality Standards.