

**U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development**
Office of Public and Indian Housing



A Good Place to Live!

Introduction

Having a good place to live is important. Through your Housing Agency (or HA), the Section 8 Rental Certificate Program and the Rental Voucher Program help you to rent a good place. You are free to choose any house or apartment you like, as long as it meets certain requirements for housing quality. Under the Rental Certificate Program, the housing generally cannot cost more than the Fair Market Rent. However, under the Rental Voucher Program, a family may choose to rent a more expensive house or apartment and pay the extra amount. Your HA will give you other information about both programs and the way your part of the rent is determined. This booklet is to help you understand what the housing quality standards are and why they are important to you.

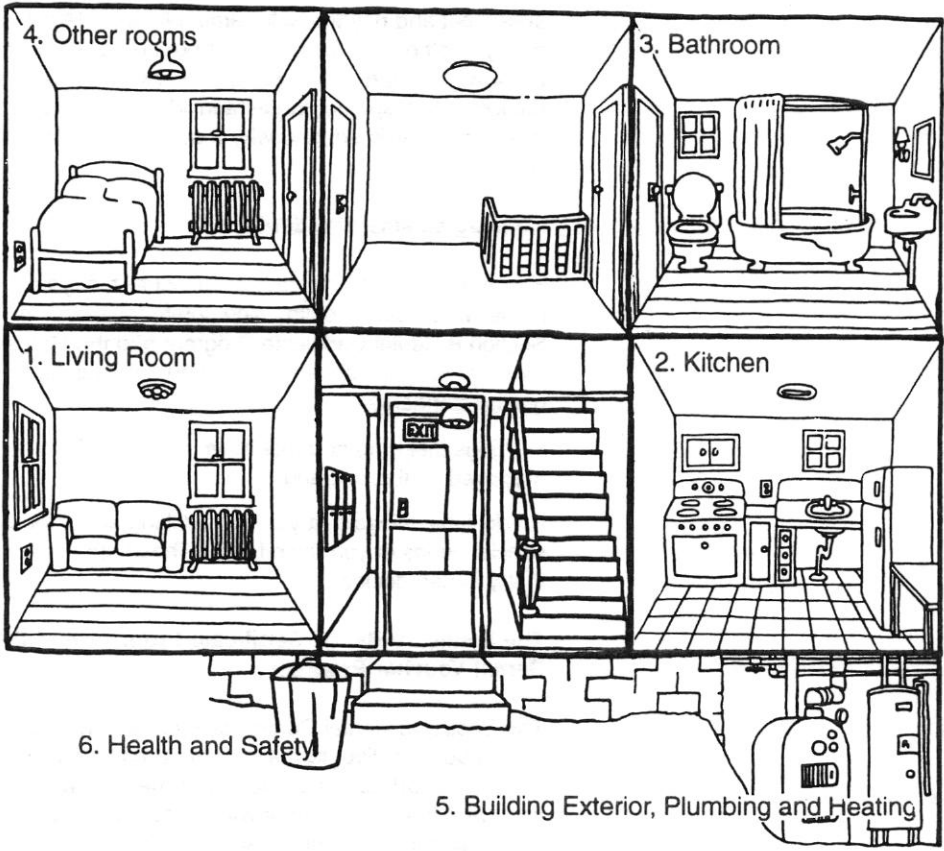
Housing Quality Standards

Housing quality standards help to insure that your home will be safe, healthy, and comfortable. In the Section 8 Rental Certificate Program and the Rental Voucher Program there are two kinds of housing quality standards.

- Things that a home *must have* in order to be approved by the HA, and
- Additional things that you *should* think about for the special needs of your own family. These are items that you can decide.

The Section 8 Rental Certificate Program and the Rental Voucher Program

The Section 8 Rental Certificate Program and the Rental Voucher Program allow you to *choose* a house or apartment that you like. It may be where you are living now or somewhere else. The *must have* standards are very basic items that every house or apartment must have. But a home that has all the *must have* standards may still not have everything *you* need or would like. With the help of the Section 8 Rental Certificate Program or Rental Voucher Program, you *should* be able to afford a good home, so you should think about what you would like your home to have. You may want a big



kitchen or a lot of windows or a first floor apartment. Worn wallpaper or paint may bother you. Think of these things as you are looking for a home. Please take time to read *A Good Place to Live*. If you would like to stay in your present home, use this booklet to see if your home meets the housing quality standards. If you want to move, use it each time you go to look for a new house or apartment. Good luck in finding your good place to live.

A Good Place to Live is divided into six sections and a summary. In each section there is a picture and an explanation of the items that a unit *must have*. There are also suggestions of some things you *should* think about. At the end of each section, think about whether or not the unit has everything it *must have* and everything you think it *should have*. There is room throughout the booklet and at the end for you to make notes.

1. Living Room
2. Kitchen
3. Bathroom
4. Other Rooms
5. Building Exterior, Plumbing, and Heating
6. Health and Safety (in the home, yard, and neighborhood)

Read each section carefully. After you find a good place to live, you can start the *Request for Lease Approval* process. You may find a place you like that has some problems with it. Check with your HA about what to do, since it may be possible to correct the problems.

The Requirements

Most houses or apartments must have at least a living room, kitchen, and bathroom. A one-room efficiency apartment with a kitchen area is all right. However, there must be a separate bathroom for private use of your family.

Generally there must be one living/sleeping room for every two family members.

1. Living Room

The Living Room Must Have:

Ceiling

A ceiling that is in good condition.

- *Not acceptable* are large cracks or holes that allow drafts, severe bulging, large amounts of loose or falling surface material such as plaster.

Walls

Walls that are in good condition.

- *Not acceptable* are large cracks or holes that allow drafts, severe bulging or leaning, large amounts of loose or falling surface material such as plaster.

Electricity

At least two electric *outlets*, or one outlet and one permanent overhead *light fixture*.

- Count  as one outlet.

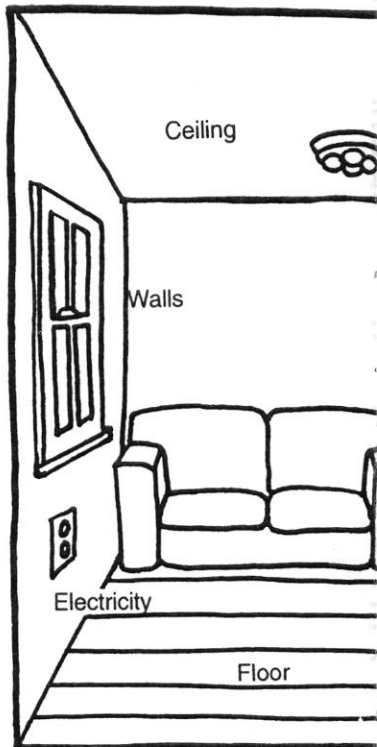
- Do not count table or floor lamps, ceiling lamps plugged into a socket, and extension cords; they are not *permanent*.

- *Not acceptable* are broken or frayed wiring, light fixtures hanging from wires with no firm support (such as a chain), missing cover plates on switches or outlets, badly cracked outlets.

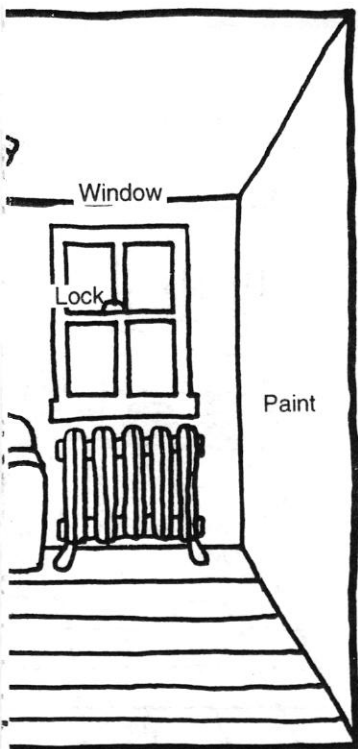
Floor

A floor that is in good condition.

- *Not acceptable* are large cracks or holes, missing or warped floor boards or covering that could cause someone to trip.



Notes:



Window

At least one window. Every window must be in good condition.

- *Not acceptable* are windows with badly cracked, broken or missing panes, and windows that do not shut or, when shut, do not keep out the weather.

Lock

A lock that works on all windows and doors that can be reached from the outside, a common public hallway, a fire escape, porch or other outside place that can be reached from the ground. A window that cannot be opened is acceptable.

Paint

- Minimal peeling or chipping paint if you have children under the age of six and the house or apartment was built before 1978.

You Should Also Think About:

- The types of locks on windows and doors.
 - Are they safe and secure?
 - Have windows that you might like to open been nailed shut?
 - The condition of the windows.
 - Are there small cracks in the panes?
 - The amount of weatherization around the doors and windows.
 - Are there storm windows?
 - Is there weatherstripping? If you pay your own utilities, this may be important.
 - The location of electric outlets and light fixtures.
 - The condition of the paint and wallpaper.
 - Are they worn, faded, or dirty.
 - The condition of the floor.
 - Is it scratched and worn?
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