

Landlord Suite

**Housing Authority of
Lackawanna County**

Winter 2014

Inspection, Inspection, Inspection

Enough with the inspections! “Over the last 12 months I had 5 inspections.” Why so many?

HACL is required to perform an inspection on every assisted unit every 12 months. So, why you were inspected the other times could be explained in this way.

When an inspection is done the inspector may have cited you with deficiencies. Any inspection that results with a deficiency will be required to be re-inspected. If the deficiency appears to be a health and safety risk, either the landlord or participant must correct that deficiency within 24 hours. This will cause the inspector to return the next business day to see if the repair was completed. If the deficiency is a non-health

or safety issue the inspector will return 30 days from the original inspection date to ensure that repairs has been completed.

HACL is required to perform Quality Control Inspections every 90 Days. The Quality Control Inspections are selected at random from the inspections that were completed within the last 3 months. So, yes your unit could be inspected again after the annual inspection. With the Quality Control Inspections, if there are deficiencies they are treated in the same manner as a regular inspection.

HUD may perform a site evaluation on HACL and choose to perform HQS inspections for any property that is (continued on page 3)

GoSection8.com

The Housing Authority of the County of Lackawanna has joined with over 300 other housing authorities in utilizing GoSection8.com.

GoSection8.com is a free housing locator for Housing Voucher participants. What does GoSection8.com has to

offer landlords? Landlords have the option of signing up for the basic packet which will provide you with free advertisement for as many properties you own. It will also list your vacate property on HACL’s website for prospective tenants. The second option is



the purchase a packet that will give you everything that is contained in the Basic Packet plus other features for a fee.

Landlords who purchase a packet would receive the benefit of additional features (continue on page 3)

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Ten 10 Tips For Landlords

Here are 10 tips that will help you in selecting a good tenant. 1. Check credit and rental history. Do your part to make sure you are getting the best tenant possible and don't just accept them because they have a voucher. And the program may guarantee to pay part of their rent. 2. Put everything in writing. Any form of communication with the tenant should be done in writing this will avoid the he

said she said. 3. Collect a security deposit. Collecting a deposit provide you with some financial insures if things should go wrong. 4. Respect the privacy of the tenant. Once you allow the tenant to move in your unit, it becomes their home. You should have a statement in the lease that discuss when and why you will enter the home. 5. Make repairs promptly. Make repairs as soon as possible to avoid

further damage. A small leak could cost if left unattended. 6. Make time and review the lease with the tenant before they sign it. This will give them an opportunity to ask questions and know what will be expected of them while living in the unit. This will prevent any future problems. 7. Inspect the unit. Walk through the unit with the tenant before you give them the (continue on page 3)

Landlord – Tenant Disputes



It is important to know the rights of each party in a landlord/tenant relationship. A thorough understanding can save you time, money and the necessity to settle a dispute in court. This all too common occurrence can be avoided when both parties understand their rights and responsibilities and abide by them. One way a landlord could minimize disputes, disagreements and problems might be to establish a very

clearly written lease. Disputes can be avoided when you are knowledgeable of the law and your rights. Staying up to date on changes to the housing laws will help ensure that you are more informed as a landlord. Here are some thoughts of how to handle a tenant dispute: Keeping your cool is essential. Try to stay as calm as possible, and do avoid making a difficult situation worse. Talk it out if possible. Many problems can be solved

if the issue is discussed thoroughly on both sides. State clearly in the lease the steps that will be taken to remedy any dispute. Be sure to communicate with the HACL case worker when you have a dispute with a client. We may be able to assist with the issues.

Myths & Misconceptions

Like everything in the world you will find there are Myths & Misconceptions in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Hopefully, we will address some of these myths & misconceptions so you will have a better understanding of the program.

Housing Choice Voucher

participants are overall "bad people". *False: There are no documented statistics which would leave anyone to believe that a higher percentage of participants receiving assistance are known to abuse their rental unit and/or are frequently delinquent in paying their portion of rent as compared to non-HCV tenants.*

Landlords that participate in the HCV Program are required to use only a lease provided by HACL. *False: Landlords are required to use the same lease that they are using for non-HCV tenants.*

Landlords are not allowed to collect full security deposits. (continue on page 4)

Inspection, Inspection, Inspection – continued from page 1

under contract. They may find deficiencies which will result in HUD preforming follow up inspections.

One way to help minimize the deficiencies would be when you are notified of an upcoming inspection go and do a walk through inspection of your own. This will allow you an opportunity to catch some of the deficiencies before we do. Then you need to make any repairs you observe during your inspection. Talk to the tenant

letting them know that when something breaks they must call to report the problem immediately.

You can take and use a copy of the HUD Inspection form as a tool for you when you are doing your own unit inspection. You download and print the form from HUD Website: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=52580.pdf>. Having this form will give you a better understanding of what the

inspector is looking at when they are performing a HQS Inspection.

HACL do understand that life happens. So, if you do an inspection prior to HACL's inspection, things will break, stop working or just fall apart. The tenant just didn't report it in time. But, how you handle it make a big difference in it being a 24 hours or 30 days deficiency.

A Preventative Maintenance program could be a valuable asset with any deficiencies.

GoSection8.com - continued from page 1

such as having your vacancies appearing at or near the top of the list during searches, you could view tenant's profile; your property also could be listed to other rental sites including Trulia, Zillow and Hotpads. Purchasing a packet will display an enhanced view of your property with a short description. You will be able to track all tenants who viewed the details of your property and we will provide you with their

contact information. You will know about leads before the competition and can contact them instantly with the new quick contact feature.

Landlords who do not feel comfortable in submitting the information themselves or do not own a computer. You can either contact a GoSection8.com representative at (866) 466-7328 or complete the Property Listing Form and fax it to (561) 416-9848. A GoSection8.com staff

person will put your listing on HACL website for viewing.

If you want to take a look at the website go to: www.GoSection8.com and see what they have to offer you.



Ten 10 Tips For Landlords - continued from page 2

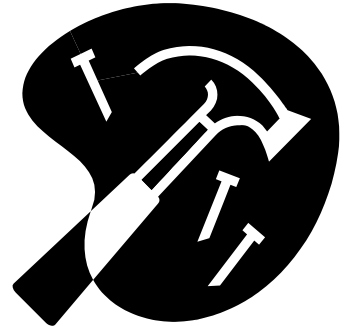
keys. If you can and the tenant is available you should walk through the unit when the tenant moves out. You may want to inspect the unit occasionally throughout the tenancy. 8. Protect your unit from crime. Make sure your unit has the proper exterior lighting, the locks on

doors are working, trees and brushes are trimmed and windows can be secured. 9. Address any hazards on the property. Make sure your property does not contain lead based paint and all smoke detectors are in good working order. 10. Talk to your tenant. Before small

misunderstandings get out of hand and it ends up resulting in hurt feelings, court proceedings and bad relationships. Take a minute to talk to them and don't forget to follow up with a written notice. If you follow these 10 steps you can avoid a lot of problems with your tenant.

Most Common HQS Failed Items

- Non-functional smoke detectors
- Missing or cracked electrical outlet or cover plates
- Railings not present where required
- Peeling exterior and interior paint. Lead Paint.
- Trip hazards caused by improperly installed floor coverings (carpets/vinyl)
- Cracked or broken window panes
- Inoperable burner on stoves or inoperable range hoods
- Missing burner control knobs.



Housing Authority of the
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Myths & Misconceptions - continued from page 2

False: There is no restriction as to the amount of security deposit a landlord may collect, as long as the amount does not exceed one month of the rental amount charged.

The HCV Program requires housing quality standards beyond what one would consider being average.

False: HUD has provided a listing of minimum housing quality standards that a dwelling unit must meet in order to qualify. These standards address only the basic needs of decent, safe, and sanitary housing.

It is impossible to evict a HCV tenant when they

violate the lease. *False: HCV tenants are bound by the terms of their lease and are subject to eviction as is any non-HCV tenant. HAACL does not condone abusive and/or non-compliant behavior by our participants, nor do we support participants who choose to do so.*

HCV Program will not afford a landlord the ability to charge participants the same rent amount that is being charged to non-HCV tenants. *False: While certain extraordinary high rents may in fact be out of reach, the HCV Program will try in most cases to approve rents that are reasonable.*

Once you rent to one HCV participant, you are required to lease to every other HCV participant that approaches you for housing from that point on. *False: While this was once the case, this requirement is no longer in effect.*

Participation by a landlord in the HCV Program requires them to process an insurmountable amount of paperwork on an on-going basis. *False: With the exception of the lease agreement, all pertinent paperwork is processed by HAACL Staff.*