

**DECATUR HOUSING AUTHORITY  
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM  
New Annual HQS Inspection Procedures FAQ**

Decatur Housing Authority (DHA) has outsourced Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Housing Quality Standards (HQS) annual inspections. Housing Inspectors employed by McCright and Associates will perform annual HQS inspections beginning September 1, 2021. DHA inspectors will not conduct annual HQS inspections. DHA inspectors will conduct initial inspections, special inspections, and quality control inspections.

**Q. What is an annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection?**

A. After a family moves into an assisted unit, HUD requires housing authorities to inspect the unit to ensure the unit is decent, safe, and sanitary. HQS inspections do not include cosmetic changes to a unit. HQS inspections deal with health and safety issues.

**Q. Will DHA housing inspectors conduct annual HQS inspection?**

A. No, beginning September 1, 2021, annual inspections will be performed by inspectors from McCright and Associates.

**Q. I received a letter from McCright and Associates notifying me about an annual inspection. Is this legitimate?**

A. Yes, DHA inspector will not perform annual inspection after August 31, 2021.

**Q. I received a call from McCright and Associates about an inspection. Is this legitimate?**

A. Yes, McCright inspectors/staff will call to remind you about your upcoming annual inspection.

**Q. Will McCright inspectors conduct all inspections?**

A. No, McCright inspectors will conduct annual and annual follow-up inspections.

**Q. Who will conduct initial/move-in inspections?**

A. DHA inspectors will conduct initial, special, and quality control inspections.

**Q. What is a quality control inspection?**

A. HUD requires a housing authority supervisor or other qualified person to reinspect a sample of units under contract during the PHA fiscal year.

**Q. What is a special inspection?**

A. HUD requires housing authorities to conduct a special inspection upon receipt of a complaint from an assisted family or governmental official regarding the unit's condition.

**Q. How do I request a special inspection?**

A. To request a special inspection, send an email explaining the problems you are having to your Housing Specialist. The email will be forwarded to the inspector. The inspector will contact you to schedule a special inspection.

**Q. My ceiling fell in my unit and my landlord won't return my call.**

A. Email DHA and request a special inspection. Do not call McCright for a special inspection.

**Q. Should landlords inspect their units during the year?**

A. Yes, we encourage owners to inspect their units at least quarterly to improve the chances that their unit will pass the annual inspection and not go into abatement.

**Q. What is abatement?**

A. HUD does not allow housing authorities to pay an owner if the unit fails inspection and the repairs are not corrected by the due date. Payments are stopped or abated. Abated payments cannot be recouped.

**Q. Does my unit have to go into abatement?**

A. No unit should ever go into abatement. Owners should complete the repairs immediately. If repairs are completed correctly by the due date, the unit will not go into abatement.

**Q. I cannot make the repairs because it keeps raining. What should I do?**

A. Contact the inspector in writing before the due date and request an extension. Explain why you are requesting the extension. Do not wait until the due date to request an extension.

**Q. I cannot complete the repair because the part is on order. What should I do?**

A. Contact the inspector in writing before the due date and give the inspector a copy of the order. Request an extension.

**Q. My unit went into abatement for two months and my housing assistance payments (HAP) stopped. My unit passed last week, and payments resumed. Will I be reimbursed for the two months' HAP that was withheld?**

A. No. Owners cannot be paid when the unit is in abatement. Abated payments are lost payments.

**Q. Can I charge the tenant for the money DHA withheld because my unit went into abatement?**

A. No, per the federal regulations, the family is not responsible for housing assistance payments that were abated. The owner must not put abated payments on the tenant's credit. The owner cannot evict the family for payments withheld due to abatement. The family must continue to pay their share of rent during the abated period.

**Q. Does DHA have an inspection checklist?**

A. Yes, visit our website, [www.decaurhousing.org](http://www.decaurhousing.org) . Click on the Inspection Checklist for Landlords link. The checklist is not all inclusive but covers the most common deficiencies.

**Q. How can I prevent my unit from going into abatement?**

A. Units should never go into abatement. Review the inspection checklist. Inspect your unit regularly. Make all repairs before the due date. Request an extension in advance if needed.

**Q. My unit went into abatement because I did not get the mail.**

A. It is the owner's responsibility to notify DHA of changes in your contact information, including address, phone number and email address. Changes in owner information must be submitted to DHA in writing. The Change in Owner Information form is available on DHA's website, [www.decaurhousing.org](http://www.decaurhousing.org) under the Forms tab. DHA will update owner information upon receipt of the new owner information.

**Q. Can the HAP contract be terminated if the unit is in abatement?**

A. Yes. If the repairs are not completed correctly by the due date, DHA may send a contract termination letter within thirty days. The family will be notified that they must move from the unit by a specified date.

**Q. If I purchase a unit in abatement, am I responsible for making the repairs?**

A. Yes. You should ask the seller if the unit is in abatement before you purchase the unit.

**Q. Can I be terminated if I don't make repairs?**

A. Yes, the federal regulations require participants to make repairs for deficiencies that were assigned to them by the inspector. Per the federal regulations, if the family has caused a breach of the HQS, the PHA must take prompt and vigorous action to enforce the family obligations. The PHA may terminate assistance for the family in accordance with 24 CFR 982.552.

**Q. If the landlord makes the repairs that were assigned to the participant, can the landlord charge the participant for making the repairs.**

A. Yes. Participants are responsible for repairing deficiencies assigned to them.

**Q. Can I move from the unit if I have not made the repairs I am responsible for?**

A. Tenants are responsible for damages to the unit beyond normal wear and tear. The owner can take tenants to court for damages beyond normal wear and tear. Also, the owner can keep the security deposit if the family has damaged the unit beyond normal wear and tear. The federal regulations require you to repair any deficiencies assigned to you. You must pay the owner for the damages to the property in accordance with the lease.

**Q. Can I be terminated from the HCV program if I am not home to admit the inspector?**

A. If you cannot be at home, or you cannot have an adult or the owner present at the unit to admit the inspector, you should notify the inspector at least 48 hours in advance of the inspection date and ask to reschedule the inspection.

**Q. What happens if I miss two inspections?**

A. You will receive a proposed termination letter.

**Q. What happens if I do not allow the owner or their maintenance staff to make repairs?**

A. The landlord and/or their maintenance staff must be permitted to make the repairs. If you do not allow the repairs to be made, you will receive a proposed termination letter. The federal regulations require landlords to make repairs and participants to allow the repairs to be made.

**Q. My unit went into abatement, and I was notified that the contract would be terminated. Do I have to move?**

A. You must immediately contact your Housing Specialist. Your Housing Specialist will send you a transfer briefing packet and begin to process you to move to a new unit. You must complete and submit the briefing packet and watch the briefing video. You will be issued a voucher, an estimator and RFTA so you can find another unit.

**Q. If the housing assistance payment (HAP) contract is terminated after the unit has been in abatement and I don't move by the termination date, do I have to pay the rent?**

A. Yes, you will have to pay the full rent. If the owner charges \$1,000 for rent, you will have to pay \$1,000.

**Q. My landlord wants to inspect my unit every three months. Is that okay?**

A. Yes, we encourage owners to inspect their units quarterly so that they can make repairs as needed and to prevent the unit from failing the annual inspection.

**Q. DHA abated the unit. Do I have to pay the housing authority's portion of rent?**

A. No, per the federal regulations, you are not responsible for DHA's portion of rent.

**Q. Can I be terminated if I don't make my repairs?**

A. Yes, the federal regulations require families to repair any deficiencies assigned to them during an inspection.

**Q. I cannot afford to repairs the deficiencies. Can I be terminated?**

A. You should make every effort to make repairs completely and correctly to prevent termination of assistance.

**Q. Can the owner charge me if they make the repairs assigned to me?**

A. Yes. If the owner corrects the deficiencies assigned to you, you are responsible for paying the owner for the repairs. The owner can take you to court for failure to repay him/her for making the repairs assigned to you.

**Q. The deficiency assigned to me is life-threatening. Do I have 30 days to make the repairs?**

A. No. Life-threatening repairs **MUST** be corrected in 24 hours.

**Q. Am I responsible for cutting the grass and maintaining the yard?**

A. If the lease says the family is responsible for maintaining the yard, then you must maintain the yard, including cutting the grass and trimming shrubbery.

**Q. My car is in the driveway. It is inoperable and I do not have a current tag. Is that a HQS violation?**

A. Yes.