

HOUSING INSPECTIONS

Your staff time and your agency's resources are valuable!!! Here are some ideas to make better use of your time and the time of your staff.

Requests for an inspection are to be made at least 7-business days prior to the planned move in of a person. Fax or email the attached form to 615-532-9988 or Betty.Chester@tn.gov

Most frequent reasons for a site failure:

1. At least one working outlet or one working permanently installed ceiling or wall light fixture. (All outlets within 6' of a water source must have GFCI)
2. All permanently installed ceiling or all light fixtures have covers if they were designed to have covers. (CFL [compact florescent lamp] bulbs do not require a cover due to lack of heat produced by these bulbs)
3. Emergency evacuation plan available in the unit.
4. Temperature pressure relief valve with a ¾" overflow pipe. (Water heater)
5. Carbon monoxide detector for homes that have natural gas service.
6. Fire extinguisher in the kitchen and one available on every floor.
7. Windows are made to open and will stay open without a prop.
Windows are free from breaks and cracks.
8. Porch, stair and railing issues:
 - A secure rail with adequate protection to prevent a person from falling through for porch, balcony, carport or any other exposed area 30" or higher.
 - Stairs, rails and porches are secured.
 - A secure handrail with adequate protection to prevent a person from falling through if there are 4 or more steps and one side of the steps is exposed.
 - There at least one handrail where there are 4 or more steps or one side of the steps is exposed.

BEFORE THE INSPECTION:

How to prepare for an inspection:

- ✓ Use the Housing Inspection Check List used by the state inspectors (along with all required forms for inspections or discontinuation of a site code) is available on the DIDS web site; www.tn.gov/didd
- ✓ Our Housing Inspectors report that agencies that have their maintenance personnel or agency Program Managers pre-inspect homes have a much higher rate of passing during the initial inspection than those that are not pre-inspected by someone knowledgeable about maintenance issues or rental property.

- ✓ Pre-rental criteria: have some “standards” that will be applied to what you will and will not rent.
- ✓ Initial inspections require the electricity; gas and water to be on (check outlets, etc.)
- ✓ Have an evacuation plan ready for the property (can use copy of apartment complex brochure with floor plan)
- ✓ You might want to consider carrying the following items with you for housing inspections:
 1. 9-volt batteries for smoke and CO detectors
 2. Spare, battery operated smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (for properties not yet occupied)
 3. Fire extinguisher (for properties not yet occupied)
 4. Extra switch and outlet plates/screws
 5. CFL (compact florescent lamps) bulbs

How to coordinate with landlords for needed repairs

- What repairs “belong” to the landlord and which ones do not? Know your lease agreement! Landlords will typically not repair items that are damaged due to “Tennant Neglect”. Many leases consider failure to report maintenance need (water leak) as neglect and therefore the responsibility of the tenant.
- Negotiate with landlords about who will pay for/complete pre-occupancy repairs, i.e., offer to purchase the GFCIs (establishment funding) and ask that the landlord’s maintenance install them.
- Most landlords will be reasonable if you are, too. Cultivate a relationship of cooperation with landlords. This should be a mutually beneficial relationship. If you take good care of the landlord’s property the landlord will usually take good care of you and your needs!
- Make sure that something that is reported to be fixed is really fixed! Our Housing Inspectors report that frequently they will return to a property for a re-inspection and find that a repair was not made or made but did not “fix” the problem.

Transitions:

- If you are the receiving agency of a property previously managed by another agency please check with the Transition Office for your region or with Betty Chester at the Central Office as to the status of the housing inspection before actually transferring this property. The property must have a current “passed” inspection to be eligible to receive a site code for your agency.
- Site codes do not transfer from one agency to another – they are agency specific.
- At the current time DIDD does not have the resources to complete inspections more often than the 2-years requirement. If you are transitioning a home with a current inspection into your agency it is your

responsibility to assure that any needed repairs are completed by the sending agency before the transition.

- If the agency is closing/vacating a home or a person and their home are transitioning to another agency, the agency must submit a “Supported Living Homes Closure or Change to New Agency” form to Betty.Chester@tn.gov Ms. Chester will forward this information on to Fiscal Services.

Semiannual Inspections:

- “Tenant Neglect” issues: Make sure that your DSP support people to be good, responsible tenants! I.E., mold around tub/toilet, water damage, plumbing problems caused by articles placed into plumbing, replacing air filters on a regular basis, etc. Help the Service Recipients to be good tenants by taking good care of the property they live in and reporting needed repairs before they become a problem.
- Monthly “House Check” maintenance list: make sure that maintenance issues are addressed timely during the year and they will not become “issues” during the required semiannual inspections!

Process for getting a site code assigned to a new address:

1. Agency contacts Betty Chester (615-532-9988 or Betty.Chester@tn.gov) to request an inspection (form available on DIDD web site).
2. Home is inspected and passes inspection. (Site Code is not issued until the site passes inspection!)
3. Information/report from the Housing Inspector goes to:
 - a. the agency
 - b. the Regional Office
 - The Regional Office forwards a request for site code to the Central Office (Administrative Services). The turn around time for assigning a site code is usually about 3-5 working days. Site codes cannot be dated before the request date (no retroactive site codes will be issued).
 - **Note:** FMRS and Semi-Independent Living residences do not require an inspection and are simply assigned a site code by Administrative Services at the Central Office. Please know if one of these sites “accidentally” gets inspected and does not pass there will be an expectation that repairs are made promptly in order to provide a safe living environment for the service recipient.

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