



HOUSE NOTES

A Newsletter for Los Angeles County Section 8 Owners
Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles
FALL 2013



Carbon Monoxide Detectors

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES (HACoLA) NOW REQUIRES CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS IN ALL UNITS PARTICIPATING IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



In accordance with California Law (The Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2010), HACoLA requires that Carbon Monoxide detection devices be installed. As of July 1, 2013, HACoLA began enforcing the installation of Carbon Monoxide detectors during a unit's Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections.

In accordance with California Law, Carbon Monoxide detectors are required as follows:

Any unit having a fossil fuel burning (ex. natural gas) heater or appliance, fireplace, or an attached garage must have a Carbon Monoxide detection device installed. Placement of the device should be as follows:

1. There must be one centrally located outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. Each detector shall be located on the wall or ceiling. Any other location is only acceptable if specified in the installation instructions that accompany the device. If there are distinctly separate sleeping areas in the unit, there must be a detector for each sleeping area.
2. There must be at least one Carbon Monoxide detector on each level of the unit.
3. Carbon Monoxide detectors cannot be installed directly above, or next to, a fuel burning appliance.
4. If the device is a combination Carbon Monoxide device and smoke detector, the combined device must emit an alarm or voice warning in a manner that clearly differentiates between a Carbon Monoxide alarm warning and a smoke detector warning.

For additional information about Carbon Monoxide detectors and their proper placement you may visit: http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_carbonmonoxide.php.

Clearing Inspection Deficiencies via Self-Certification

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NOW CERTIFY THAT YOU FIXED UNIT DEFICIENCIES?

Each year, the HACoLA conducts an annual HQS inspection of your unit to ensure that it is in compliance with minimum health and safety standards. The HACoLA now permits owners the option to clear *owner-related non-emergency deficiencies* by submitting a certification along with proof that confirms the deficiencies have been corrected rather than have an "in-person" follow-up inspection. Please note that this option is only available for *owner-related non-emergency deficiencies*. HACoLA will continue to conduct "in-person" follow-up inspections to clear tenant related deficiencies.



Examples of proof that should be submitted include picture(s) of the corrected item and/or an invoice or receipt detailing the repair. The certification and proof must be submitted before the date of the scheduled follow-up inspection. Once received, a Supervisor will review the certification and proof to determine if an in-person follow-up inspection is needed to clear the owner deficiencies. Owners will be contacted to discuss the outcome of the clearance submitted.

Rent Reasonableness Adjustments

REQUESTING A RENT INCREASE WILL SUBJECT YOU TO A CONTRACT RENT REDUCTION

If you request a rent increase, the unit's contract rent will be compared to similar unassisted rental units in the area. If it is found that your unit's contract rent exceeds current market rental rents, the contract rent for the unit will be reduced.

Program regulations require that HACoLA ensure that rents charged by owners with subsidized rental units have their contract rent determined reasonable, *at all times*.

For this reason, when an owner requests to increase the rent, HACoLA must request a rental market survey from a third party vendor, GoSection8.com. GoSection8 is a vendor that provides an unbiased report of market rental rents that are listed near your unit. This unbiased report allows HACoLA to ensure that the rent meets program requirements under rent reasonableness.



Assisted Housing Division recovers \$189,000 from fraudulent owners and tenants participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program

HACoLA's Assisted Housing Division, which administers the Section 8 HCV program, recovered \$189,000 in housing assistance payments made under fraudulent circumstances where both the owner and the tenant were involved.

In one instance, a case manager noticed the same last name for the owner of a unit and the tenant who was renting it. Upon further research, it was discovered that the owner and the tenant were, in fact, related and had cheated the HCV program out of almost \$67,000. The family has since been terminated from the HCV program and the full amount has been recovered.

A second case was discovered where family members were acting as both owner and tenant. Fraudulent activity dated back to March 2008 for a total of over \$68,000. The family has since been terminated from the HCV program and arrangements have been made to recover the funds.

Lastly, an anonymous call reported that the owner of a Section 8 assisted unit was living with the tenant who was designated as the Head of Household of that unit. The call triggered an investigation that recovered \$54,438.

The HACoLA takes allegations of fraud very seriously and actively seeks recovery of misuse of program funds. If you suspect program fraud, you may anonymously report it by calling (877) 881-7233.



Where Is My Inspection Report?

You may have noticed that HACoLA stopped mailing paper copies of inspection reports. Inspection reports are accessible via the online Owner Portal. To obtain your inspections results, please visit the Owner Portal at www.lacdc.org/HAPortal2/. To register, you will need your vendor identification number and the last four digits of your social security number.

Section 8 Owner Orientation Seminars

Orientation sessions are designated to explain how the Section 8 HCV Program works from both the HACoLA and the owner's perspective. To attend an upcoming session, you must email public_liaison@hacola.org, or call (626) 586-1650 and reserve a space. Each session is limited to 30 people, so please reserve a space soon! Those without a reservation will be turned away.

SEMINAR DATES

Alhambra Office:

- Wednesday, November 20, 2013
- Thursday, January 30, 2014
- Thursday, March 27, 2014

Palmdale Office:

- Thursday, June 19, 2014



Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles

Main Office

700 W. Main Street
Alhambra, CA 91801

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1510
Alhambra, CA 91802

Phone (626) 262-4510

(800) 731-4663

TDD (855) 892-6095

Website www.hacola.org

Palmdale Office

2323 Palmdale Blvd, Ste. B
Palmdale, CA 93550

Phone (661) 575-1511

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HOUSE NOTES is a publication of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, which is dedicated to building better lives and better neighborhoods. For questions regarding this newsletter, please contact House Notes editor, Dayana Zavala, at the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, P.O. Box 1510, Alhambra, CA 91802 or at (626) 586-1658.