

Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Requirements



The Housing Quality Standards (HQS) regulations are found at 24 CFR 982.401. The CFR is available at www.gpo.gov. Please contact your local AHFC office if you have any questions regarding these requirements.

Room	Electrical	Windows
Living Room	Two (2) outlets OR One (1) outlet and one (1) permanent light fixture	One window, not required to open.
Kitchen	One (1) electric outlet and one permanent ceiling or wall light fixture that works	If there is a window, it must open, close, and seal if designed to open.
Bedroom	Two (2) outlets OR One (1) outlet and one (1) permanent light fixture	One window – it must open, close, and seal if designed to open.
Bathroom(s)	One (1) permanent light fixture	A window that opens or a working exhaust fan.
Other Rooms	One (1) electric light fixture or outlet	All rooms must have a means of natural or artificial illumination.

General Requirements

1. A handrail is required for four (4) or more steps, including landings.
2. All outside porches must have railings if they are more than 30 inches from the ground.
3. All outside area accessible by the tenant family must be free from debris and hazardous materials (i.e., broken glass, old refrigerators, used car batteries, dilapidated buildings, abandoned vehicles, low-hanging electrical wires, hazardous waste dumps, open sewers, etc.).
4. The roof and outside coverings must be weather-tight.
5. Windows and doors that can be reached from the outside (i.e., adjacent roofs, stairs, fire escapes) must lock properly. All window cranks must be present.
6. All smoke alarms must comply with state law and be in working order.
7. Operable carbon monoxide (CO) detectors as prescribed by Alaska Statute 18.70.095
8. There must be no leaking pipes or faucets in the kitchen, bathroom(s), or utility room.
9. Hot and cold running water must be present.
10. Painted surfaces must meet HUD-specified lead-based paint requirements.
11. Furnace must be adequate and free from debris and fire hazards.
12. The furnace must have a manual shut-off.
13. The furnace must be properly vented.
14. The water heater must have an overflow valve and a properly attached discharge line directed near or through the floor.
15. All water heaters must be shielded from the living area.



Mobile Home Water Heaters

The inspector must have access to all water heaters. The owner is responsible for the clearing and removal of snow if the water heater is outside the mobile home.

Kitchen Requirements

1. All stove burners must work.
2. All stove knobs must be present.
3. The fan and light in the hood must work (if present).
4. The seal on the stove must be in good condition.
5. The refrigerator must be the proper size relative to the tenant family size.
6. The refrigerator must keep food cold enough to avoid spoilage.
7. Refrigerator seals must be in good condition.

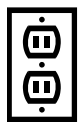
Number of Rooms Required

A unit must contain at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons.

Electrical Requirements

HUD's Housing Quality Standards requires the following operating conditions for electrical outlets. There are two basic types of outlets: two-pronged and three-pronged outlets. Three-pronged outlets with GFCI are acceptable as long as the outlet is grounded or has working GFCI protections.

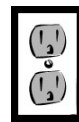
1. All outlets and light switches must have unbroken cover plates.
2. If the outlet is disconnected, it must be covered.
3. No bare wires, hanging switches, or light fixtures hanging by electrical wires are acceptable in any room accessible by the tenant family including garages, utility rooms, and common areas.
4. All permanent light fixtures will be tested.
5. All outdoor plug-ins must comply electrically and have functional covers.



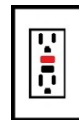
Two-Pronged Outlet. A two-pronged outlet is ungrounded and has a two-wire electrical system that includes only a hot and a neutral wire. Original two-pronged ungrounded outlets are acceptable under HQS as long as they are in proper operating condition. The landlord is not required to upgrade an original two-pronged outlet. The inspector will verify that the outlet is in proper operating condition by ensuring a plugged in appliance or agency-provided outlet tester works.

A three-pronged outlet should not be substituted for ungrounded outlets unless 1) a

ground wire is connected to the outlet, or 2) a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protects the outlet.



Three-Pronged Outlet. A three-pronged outlet typically has a three wire electrical system that includes hot, neutral, and ground wires. Three-pronged outlets, including upgraded outlets that have been changed from two-pronged to three-pronged outlets are acceptable as long as the outlet is grounded. The inspector will verify that the outlet is grounded by using an outlet tester.



Three-Pronged Outlet with GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter). An outlet with GFCI senses a difference in current flow between the hot and neutral terminals and in unsafe conditions, shuts off the flow of current to the outlet. Installing a three-pronged outlet with GFCI is a cost-effective method to upgrade from two-pronged to three-pronged outlets without requiring the expensive installation of a new ground wire. The inspector will verify the outlet is grounded by using an outlet tester. If the outlet is not grounded, the inspector will trip the GFCI outlet by pressing the test button. If the power shuts off, the outlet is operating safely.

Smoke Detector Information



The State Fire Marshall's Office has adopted a policy that requires that a criminal complaint be filed whenever the Department of Public Safety investigates a fire in a dwelling unit and finds that smoke detection devices have not been installed or maintained in accordance with Alaska Statute 18.70.095.

All smoke detectors will be tested by AHFC at the time of the move-in inspection. Detectors will also be tested during all subsequent inspections of the tenant's unit.

Tenant Responsibilities

- Tenants are responsible for testing all unit smoke detectors on a periodic basis.
 - Battery-operated smoke detectors should have the batteries replaced at least once a year.
 - Electric detectors powered with AC power should be tested once a week.
- Tenants are required to keep the smoke detectors in working condition by keeping charged batteries in battery-type detectors. Replacement of batteries is normally at the tenant's expense.
- Any detectors, which are disabled or damaged by the tenant, must be replaced immediately at the tenant's expense.

Owner Responsibilities

- The owner is required to maintain smoke detectors in working condition.
- If a smoke detector is defective, the owner must repair or replace it immediately when notified.

Penalties

Failure on the part of the owner, landlord, or tenant to comply with the requirements of the law can result in imprisonment for up to six (6) months, a fine up to \$500, or both.

Carbon Monoxide Detector Information



Effective May 1, 2005 AHFC Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspectors required operable carbon monoxide (CO) detectors as prescribed by Alaska Statute 18.70.095. AHFC uses the requirements contained in Alaska Statute, not local codes, as its guide for whether a unit passes or fails the inspection. Direct questions concerning State of Alaska carbon monoxide alarm requirements to the State Fire Marshall's Office, Alaska Department of Public Safety, web page at: www.dps.state.ak.us/fire.

The Municipality of Anchorage has stringent requirements. Anchorage landlords are encouraged to comply with those requirements. For questions about Anchorage carbon monoxide alarm requirements, see: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/legislation/2004%20Ordinances/ao2004-064.pdf>.

Who is responsible for the CO detector?

Owner Responsibilities

- The alarm should be installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- After notification of any malfunctions by the tenant, the owner is responsible for repair or replacement

Tenant Responsibilities

- The tenant must keep the devices in working condition by keeping charged batteries in battery-operated devices and by testing the device periodically
- Disabling a CO detector is a violation of the tenant's HQS responsibilities

Which units require CO detectors?

- A unit that contains a carbon-based fuel appliance or a device that produces by-products of combustion
- A unit serviced by a forced air heating system that uses carbon-based fuel
- A unit that is adjacent to a hot water baseboard (hydronic) heating system that uses carbon-based fuel
- A unit that has an attached garage or carport
- A unit adjacent to a parking space (within 10 feet)

What type of appliance or device produces by-products of combustion?

- Gas, propane, wood, charcoal, or fuel oil: furnaces, boilers, water heaters, fireplaces, space heaters, stoves, ranges, ovens, stovetops, or dryers
- Gas fireplace logs and unvented heaters
- Cars, snowmobiles, 4-wheelers, motorcycles

Where is the detector placed?

- Height is not an issue as carbon monoxide is roughly the same weight as air
- Place it in a location in the unit where occupants hear it
- Do not cover it with furniture or drapes