Mainely Landlords
For landlords with tenants who have Housing Choice Vouchers from MaineHousing

Winter 2013

FIRE SAFETY

A review of smoke and CO detectors, egress and heating system laws

Structure fires are too common this winter, with the loss of life, homes, and property damage mounting. The sheer number of them has caught our attention – as has word from the Maine State Fire Marshal that most of the fires could have been prevented.

It was two horrific house fires late last year that claimed the lives of six people, a father and his three children in Orrington and two friends in Orono, that brought to the forefront state and federal fire safety laws.

The common thread of these two fires and several others: no working smoke detectors.

While many people after the Orrington fire checked their detectors and battery back-ups, questioned whether they had enough detectors in their homes, and practiced their escape plans, it was a Bangor Daily News article on Maine’s laws pertaining to smoke detectors in single-family homes that initiated a different type of response: “You’ve got to be kidding me?!”

Maine’s building safety laws for single-family non-rental homes require that they have smoke detectors, but the laws do not require them to be in use, according to the Maine State Fire Marshal. Maine follows rules from what’s called the “Life Safety Code” adopted by the National Fire Protection Agency, considered the authority on fire safety.

Maine’s landlords and property owners, however, should not believe this law applies to them. It does not. According to MaineHousing Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection Manager Mike Baran, “we go to a stricter level.”

Maine’s laws changed in 2009, and any new construction must meet new requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and any older units also must meet new standards for carbon monoxide detectors. Property owners and landlords are reminded that it’s their responsibility to know the law. Please see specifics on Page 3.

In this newsletter, MaineHousing is focusing on fire safety by highlighting what is required under Maine law and what is evaluated during a Housing Quality Standards inspection.

Getting Out – Egress

Egress – or a second route out of a bedroom – is as important as a smoke detector. Landlords and tenants have a responsibility for safety. What’s unacceptable near exits such as doors and windows are piles of debris, large pieces of furniture, stacks of heavy storage containers, or other non-easily moveable objects that slow or hinder an exit from an apartment or building.

Window size: Each bedroom should have an egressable window, with the exception of rooms with water sprinklers or another door to the outside of the building.

For multi-family residences, including those that are federally funded through subsidies, Maine and the federal government have laws regarding the use and placement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, which type of smoke detector (there are two) is the best to use in what location, and whether they can be battery operated or hardwired with battery backup (depends on the year in which the units were constructed.)

Maine’s laws changed in 2009, and any new construction must meet new requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and any older units also must meet new standards for carbon monoxide detectors. Property owners and landlords are reminded that it’s their responsibility to know the law. Please see specifics on Page 3.

In this newsletter, MaineHousing is focusing on fire safety by highlighting what is required under Maine law and what is evaluated during a Housing Quality Standards inspection.

Getting Out – Egress

Egress – or a second route out of a bedroom – is as important as a smoke detector. Landlords and tenants have a responsibility for safety. What’s unacceptable near exits such as doors and windows are piles of debris, large pieces of furniture, stacks of heavy storage containers, or other non-easily moveable objects that slow or hinder an exit from an apartment or building.

Window size: Each bedroom should have an egressable window, with the exception of rooms with water sprinklers or another door to the outside of the building.

For multi-family residences, including those that are federally funded through subsidies, Maine and the federal government have laws regarding the use and placement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, which type of smoke detector (there are two) is the best to use in what location, and whether they can be battery operated or hardwired with battery backup (depends on the year in which the units were constructed.)

Maine’s laws changed in 2009, and any new construction must meet new requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and any older units also must meet new standards for carbon monoxide detectors. Property owners and landlords are reminded that it’s their responsibility to know the law. Please see specifics on Page 3.

In this newsletter, MaineHousing is focusing on fire safety by highlighting what is required under Maine law and what is evaluated during a Housing Quality Standards inspection.

Getting Out – Egress

Egress – or a second route out of a bedroom – is as important as a smoke detector. Landlords and tenants have a responsibility for safety. What’s unacceptable near exits such as doors and windows are piles of debris, large pieces of furniture, stacks of heavy storage containers, or other non-easily moveable objects that slow or hinder an exit from an apartment or building.

Window size: Each bedroom should have an egressable window, with the exception of rooms with water sprinklers or another door to the outside of the building.

For multi-family residences, including those that are federally funded through subsidies, Maine and the federal government have laws regarding the use and placement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, which type of smoke detector (there are two) is the best to use in what location, and whether they can be battery operated or hardwired with battery backup (depends on the year in which the units were constructed.)

Maine’s laws changed in 2009, and any new construction must meet new requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and any older units also must meet new standards for carbon monoxide detectors. Property owners and landlords are reminded that it’s their responsibility to know the law. Please see specifics on Page 3.

In this newsletter, MaineHousing is focusing on fire safety by highlighting what is required under Maine law and what is evaluated during a Housing Quality Standards inspection.

Getting Out – Egress

Egress – or a second route out of a bedroom – is as important as a smoke detector. Landlords and tenants have a responsibility for safety. What’s unacceptable near exits such as doors and windows are piles of debris, large pieces of furniture, stacks of heavy storage containers, or other non-easily moveable objects that slow or hinder an exit from an apartment or building.

Window size: Each bedroom should have an egressable window, with the exception of rooms with water sprinklers or another door to the outside of the building.

For multi-family residences, including those that are federally funded through subsidies, Maine and the federal government have laws regarding the use and placement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, which type of smoke detector (there are two) is the best to use in what location, and whether they can be battery operated or hardwired with battery backup (depends on the year in which the units were constructed.)

Maine’s laws changed in 2009, and any new construction must meet new requirements on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and any older units also must meet new standards for carbon monoxide detectors. Property owners and landlords are reminded that it’s their responsibility to know the law. Please see specifics on Page 3.
fire or other emergency. *(Please see diagram.)* The window opening must be at least 20 inches wide and at least 24 inches high, and the minimum clear area should be 5.7 square feet. Also, the window sill should be at least 24 inches minimum from the finished floor and a maximum 44 inches. If the room has a water sprinkler, the window does not have to be 5.7 square feet.

**Clear path:** Besides being able to exit through the window, a clear path should be constant in the bedrooms and in front of the windows. Objects that can’t be easily moved should not be placed in front of the window.

**Doors:** Doors cannot be nailed shut, padlocked, or blocked. They need to be functioning and easy to open. MaineHousing does not allow double-key deadbolts.

**Stairs and hallways:** All must have a clear path in which tenants may travel to exits.

### Heat sources & combustibles

While no working smoke detector was noted in the Fire Marshal’s review of the Orrington fire, the cause of the fire was combustible materials left too close to the wood stove.

In 2011, 522 fires in one-or two-unit dwellings or multifamily dwellings were ignited because of combustibles too close to a heat source, according to the Maine State Fire Marshal.

For safety in housing, MaineHousing adheres to specific standards regarding the placement of combustibles near heat sources. Landlords are encouraged to share this information with tenants.

No combustible materials should be placed on an oil or gas burner. Also, no combustible materials should be placed within at least 18 inches of the heat source unless it is a newer system in which the manufacturers’ recommendations state otherwise. MaineHousing refers to manufacturers’ recommendations as guidelines in most cases.

For solid fuel, such as wood and pellets, keep combustible materials at least 36 inches away from the heat source.

Use of any unvented gas heater is prohibited in any Section 8 unit!

Storage of flammable liquids including propane tanks, gas tanks, lawnmowers, chain saws, and other equipment is not allowed in any Section 8 unit, not even in the basement.

### Heating systems & fuel lines

MaineHousing requires documentation of annual servicing by licensed technicians of all oil-fired or gas-fired heating systems. The documentation should be at or near the appliance.

During an HQS inspection, MaineHousing will check fuel lines for leaks as well as for the presence of an emergency shut-off switch, firematic valve, and any other applicable requirements. Fuel lines laying on the floor where they can be stepped on or crushed must be in armored sleeves.

Inspectors, too, will check for leaks. For heating oil, they’ll look for the presence of oil off of filters or where the line connects to the burner.

### Fire extinguishers

If a landlord supplies or is required to have a fire extinguisher in their units, MaineHousing will check the tags to see if the extinguisher has been serviced within the last year. If it hasn’t, it’s a 30-day fail.

### Strobes, alarms, exit signs

If a property owner’s building is required to have strobe lights, alarms, and exit signs, HQS inspectors will check if they are operational. If not, it’s a 24-hour fail.
Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: laws and inspections

In all of the fires that firefighters statewide responded to in 2011, 832 were at structures that by law should have had a working smoke detector, and a functioning battery or battery backup (if hardwired).

Of those fires, 452, or more than half, had smoke detectors, 162 did not, and 218 were undetermined, according to the Maine State Fire Marshal.

Here is a guide for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, the laws regarding their usage, how they should be installed, and what’s looked at during an HQS inspection.

Types of smoke detectors

Two types of smoke detectors are on the market, and each have characteristics that make it ideal for specific rooms.

Ionization smoke detection is more responsive to flaming fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Photoelectric smoke detection is more responsive to fires that begin with a long period of smoldering.

MaineHousing and state law requires that any smoke detector located within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom containing a tub and/or shower be a photoelectric smoke detector. They are less affected by steam.

For best protection, use both types, according to the NFPA.

NOTE: Talking detectors or those with flashing lights should be in use for individuals with disabilities.

The absence of a working smoke detector (with functioning battery or hardwired with battery backup) is a 24-hour fail.

Installation and placement

Smoke detectors must be:

• In proper working condition with battery or electricity with battery backup.
• Located on each level of a unit, including basements but excluding crawl spaces and unfinished attics.
• Installed within 15 feet of each separate living area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. In new construction (after October 31, 2009), there must be a smoke detector in each sleeping room.

Smoke detectors must be installed:

• In rooms with ceiling slopes more than 1 foot of rise per 8 feet, the detector must be installed on the high side of the room.
• A smoke detector in a stairwell must be placed in a location to ensure that smoke rising in the stairwell cannot be prevented from reaching the detector because of an intervening door or obstruction.
• A smoke detector placed in a basement must be in close proximity to the stairway leading to the floor above.
• If mounted on the ceiling, the smoke detector must be at least 4 inches from a wall, or if mounted on a wall, the top of the detector must be not less than 4 inches and not more than 12 inches below the ceiling.
• If the wall or ceiling could be considerably warmer or colder than the room (such as a poorly insulated ceiling below an unfinished attic or exterior wall), the detector must be mounted on an interior wall.
• A smoke detector must be placed on the bottom of the joist if installed in an area with an open-joisted ceiling.
• A smoke detector must be located so that jarring or vibration will not cause accidental operation.
• A smoke detector must be mounted so that it is not supported by wiring.
• Detectors may not be installed in kitchens, garages, or other spaces where the temperature can fall below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Carbon monoxide detectors

“CO detectors” now are required under state law. HQS inspectors will look for the following:

• CO detectors should have the UL (Underwriters Laboratory) approved logo.
• CO detectors must be powered by BOTH a battery and electrical service (plugged into an electrical outlet or hardwired into the building).
• CO detectors must be located within 15 feet of bedrooms. The detectors are not required on floors where there are no bedrooms but MaineHousing recommends that one be placed in the area where the fuel burning heating system is located.

The absence of a CO detector or a non-working CO detector is a 30-day fail. The exception is a combination smoke/CO detector, in which case the absence of a non-working detector is a 24-hour fail.
MaineHousing proposes changes to... 

The purpose of MaineHousing’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is to assist very low income individuals and families to choose and lease decent, safe, and affordable privately owned rental housing, and to achieve and maintain housing stability and self-sufficiency. The rules and regulations of the HCV program are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). MaineHousing is afforded choices in the operation of the program which are included in the administrative plan, a document approved by the Board of Commissioners.

The proposed Administrative Plan will replace the existing plan adopted in 2010. The proposed plan is a more thorough presentation of the federal and MaineHousing requirements and should provide consumers and other housing entities with a useful document for understanding the program requirements.

The proposed Administrative Plan is organized into 17 chapters; each chapter addresses a key component of the Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Voucher programs. The format for the Administrative Plan is a template created by Nan McKay, a nationally recognized consulting and training company that provides services to public housing authorities. The template is based on federal regulations applicable to these two programs.

Each chapter includes the relevant federal regulation. Where a public housing authority has discretion either to expand upon or clarify its practices within the federal regulation, this is indicated in a sub-paragraph entitled MaineHousing Policy. (Significant changes are noted in italics.)

Summary of significant changes

- **Chapter 1 Overview of the Program and Plan** contains information about MaineHousing and its programs with a focus on the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. It also contains information about the purpose, intent, and use of the Administrative Plan.

- **Chapter 2 Fair Housing** explains the laws and regulations requiring MaineHousing to further civil rights and fair housing in all federally-assisted housing programs affirmatively. This chapter includes a clear description of how reasonable accommodations will be processed.

- **Chapter 3 Eligibility** includes the process and criteria for ensuring that every individual and family admitted to the HCV program meets all program eligibility requirements. This chapter includes relevant state law and practices for determining eligibility – preponderance of evidence, the process for notifying families of ineligibility. This chapter also includes the criteria for ineligibility determinations which include the use of medical marijuana.

- **Chapter 4 Applications, Waiting List and Tenant Selection** describes HUD and MaineHousing policies for taking applications, managing the waiting list and selecting families for HCV assistance. This chapter includes changes to MaineHousing preferences for selecting applicants from the waiting list. MaineHousing is proposing to maintain 16 county waiting lists.

MaineHousing is also proposing to establish preferences for:

- **Residents in MaineHousing jurisdiction** (communities without a local public housing authority);
- **Victims of domestic violence, veterans, elderly, disabled families, and families with two or more members; and/or**
- **People who are homeless**

Finally, MaineHousing is proposing to set aside 100 vouchers for the Home to Stay program that addresses the needs of the homeless.

---

Reduce your fire risk

Heating and cooking are the leading causes of residential fires in Maine. Below are fire prevention tips from the National Fire Protection Association. Communication with tenants also is beneficial in minimizing the risk of a fire.

- **Chimney and furnace:** Cleaning once a year can greatly reduce your risk of a fire. Failure to do so will result in a buildup of creosote, the leading cause of chimney fires.
- **Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors:** Test to ensure they’re working.
- **Stoves and cooking appliances:** Check to make sure the oven is clean and working properly. Follow manufacturers’ instructions and code requirements when installing and operating cooking equipment. Plug microwave ovens and other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- **Electrical appliances and wiring:** Routinely check your electrical appliances and wiring. Replace all worn, old, or damaged appliance cords. Only use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- **Electricians:** Remember that electrical work should be done only by a licensed electrician. Call an electrician if you have any of the following:
  - Recurring problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers,
  - A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance,
  - Discolored or warm wall outlets or switches,
  - A burning smell or rubbery odor coming from an appliance,
  - Flickering lights,
  - Sparks from a wall outlet,
  - Cracked or broken wall outlets.

By implementing these tips, you can reduce your fire risk and ensure the safety of your home and those around you.
HCV administrative plan; public hearing set for March 19

Mainely Landlords

Public Hearing, Comments:
MaineHousing shall hold a public hearing to receive comments on March 19, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. at the Maine State Housing Authority at 353 Water Street, Augusta. The draft Administrative Plan is available for inspection at MaineHousing’s offices in Augusta and on MaineHousing’s webpage: www.mainehousing.org. Written comments will be accepted until March 19, 2013.

• Chapter 5 Briefings and Voucher Issuance includes the expectations for families to attend a briefing, the information to be provided at briefings, how family size and rental size are determined; the expectation for the family once in their rental unit; and other program options such as Family Self Sufficiency (FSS), Homeownership, and portability to other public housing authority jurisdictions.

• Chapter 6 Income and Subsidy Determinations include the methods MaineHousing will use to determine income and expenses. It also includes how the family share of rent is calculated.

• Chapter 7 Verification describes the methods used for verifying information supporting an application and continued eligibility for rental assistance. This includes the documents required for verification, and other tools used by MaineHousing for verification such as electronic income matching systems and the use of self-certification.

• Chapter 8 Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and Rent Reasonableness includes the standards for determining that the rental unit meets housing quality standards and the rent is reasonable. This chapter includes substantive changes to housing quality standards by incorporating state laws and building code requirements, and clarifying the application of HQS in areas such as electrical, basements, etc. This chapter also includes the notification of and timelines for addressing housing quality failures. Finally, this chapter establishes a maximum timeframe of 15 days for conducting move-in inspections. This is consistent with HUD requirements and affords MaineHousing the flexibility to conduct quality inspections and assure that new units are starting the process in the best condition.

• Chapter 9 General Leasing Policies covers the lease-up process from the family’s submission of a Request for Tenancy Approval to execution of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract. This includes an initial lease of one year, owner ability to collect a security deposit, the process of approving Housing Assistance Payment contracts, and reviewing rent increases.

• Chapter 10 Moving with Continued Assistance sets forth HUD regulations and MaineHousing policies governing moves within or outside MaineHousing’s jurisdiction. This chapter describes the process for approving moves by tenants and prohibits moves within the first year of lease.

• Chapter 11 Reexaminations discusses both annual and interim reexaminations, and the recalculation of family share and subsidy that occurs as a result. This chapter includes the time frames for annual and interim reexaminations, the process for adding new family members or removing family members.

• Chapter 12 Termination of Assistance and Tenancy presents the policies that govern voluntary and involuntary terminations of assistance, and termination of tenancy by the owner. This chapter includes terminations due to evictions, criminal activity, and family absence from the unit.

• Chapter 13 Owners describes the role of the owner and the relationship between the owner and MaineHousing as expressed in the Housing Assistance Payment contract. This chapter includes the outreach by MaineHousing to recruit and retain owner participation, owner actions that may result in a tenancy request disapproval, and the elements and conditions of a Housing Assistance Payment contract. This chapter also requires owners to accept Housing Assistance Payments via electronic transfer effective January 1, 2014.

• Chapter 14 Program Integrity covers HUD and Public Housing Authority (PHA) policies designed to prevent, detect, investigate, and resolve instances of program abuse or fraud, as well as unintentional errors and omissions. This chapter describes MaineHousing’s activities to detect errors and program abuse, the notice and appeals process, and corrective measures and penalties.

• Chapter 15 Special Housing Types identifies the special housing types that MaineHousing allows a family to use. Families will not be permitted to use any Congregate Housing, Group Homes, Shared Housing, or Cooperative Housing, unless use is needed as a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to a person with disabilities. Families will be able to use single room occupants (SROs), Manufactured Homes, and the Homeownership option upon MaineHousing approval.

• Chapter 16 Program Administration discusses administrative policies and practices that are relevant to the activities covered in the proposed plan. The chapter includes the informal hearings process.

• Chapter 17 Project Based Voucher Program addresses the use of project-based vouchers (PBV). Please note: this chapter may need to be amended as HUD is considering major regulation changes to this program. This chapter includes the requirements for the selection of owner proposals for PBV assistance, the HAP contract, the selection of program participants, housing quality standards and rent determination.
MaineHousing, partners to offer ‘How to be a Good Landlord’ workshops

The HUD Housing Counseling Program grant requires MaineHousing to further fair housing in our programs and activities affirmatively. One way of furthering fair housing has been through the coordination of regional Fair Housing workshops with Pine Tree Legal Assistance (PTLA) as the presenter.

This year, MaineHousing, PTLA, and the Maine Human Rights Commission will be holding a workshop in which case studies and best practices tailored to the needs and experiences of small landlords are presented. The workshop will cover basic responsibilities under the federal Fair Housing Act and an overview of the following:

- Reasonable modification and accommodation for people with disabilities
- Protected classes and transactions
- Discriminatory harassment
- Coverage of sexual harassment in housing
- Explanation of hate crimes in housing, and
- Creating advertisements that comply with fair housing law.

Want to know the dates?:
lpatenaude@mainehousing.org

MaineHousing is in the process of scheduling the workshops. Email us and we'll be happy to send you the dates!

The tentative plan is to hold the “How to be a Good Landlord” workshop in Portland, Augusta and Bangor in the months of April and May. Dates will be announced soon, and we'd be happy to email them to you when the have been established.

Maine law on heat, temperature settings

If you are a landlord who has agreed to provide heat to your tenant, Maine law sets requirements for temperature settings and how to test if it’s correct.

The heating system must be capable of maintaining an interior temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit 5 feet from the floor and 3 feet from the exterior walls at a -20 degree Fahrenheit outside temperature, as required by Maine law.

The minimum state standard is 68 degrees. Your city may have stricter rules. Call your local code enforcement for more information.

Reminder: When MaineHousing is scheduled to inspect your unit, someone 18 years or older MUST be present in order for the inspection to be completed. This is a requirement. No exceptions can be made. If you are unable to meet this requirement, please call Inspection Services to reschedule.

We have to ask about bed bugs and fleas

You may have noticed that our inspectors ask about them. Please do not be offended. We are required to ask about any infestations every time we inspect. For information on how to address bug infestations, please read the Bed Bug Fact Sheet at: http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/general-documents/bed-bugs-fact-sheet.pdf?sfvrsn=5

Random inspections begin; need adult present

In February, MaineHousing began randomly selecting 5 percent of units statewide to inspect for Quality Assurance. These quality assurance inspections are required by HUD as part of its annual assessment of MaineHousing’s inspection performance. We will notify you if your unit has been selected for this inspection.

Resources for HCV owners, landlords

Property owners and landlords needing more information or assistance in their roles may find help in these resources. MaineHousing does not endorse any specific organization or product.

- The Maine Apartment Owners and Managers Association (MAOMA) is a trade organization that provides information, products and lobbying efforts on behalf of landlords, among other efforts. “The goal of MAOMA and its affiliates is to help our members succeed in the property management business,” according to its website.

MAOMA has five affiliated local landlord/manager chapters throughout Maine. It can be reached at 623-3480 or www.mainepartmentowners.com.

- Nan McKay and Associates is a provider of consulting, training, and products to the public housing and Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher industry.

The product line includes handbooks to help HCV property owners and landlords. They include The Family Handbook: A Guide to the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which offers offers a general program overview in addition to providing answers to many of the program-related questions facing new participants, and The Owner's Handbook, which answers prospective Section 8 property owners’ questions about their role in the program.

These books can be purchased online at www.nanmckay.com, select “products” and then “handbooks.”
Mainely Landlords

Answers to your frequently asked questions on tenant issues, inspections

Q. A voucher holder wants to rent my unit. May I move the prospective tenant in today? And will you pay me retro to the day the tenant moved in?

A. No. There are steps that have to be followed in order for you to receive payment from HUD. A Section 8 voucher holder will have been given a Request For Tenancy Approval (RFTA) packet. You and the tenant are required to complete these forms and submit them to MaineHousing.

Once your unit has been approved financially, we are required to inspect your unit within 15 days of receipt of the RFTA. If your unit passes, we require a lease and contract before we can authorize payment. Payment only will be authorized for a passed unit with a contract. We will not issue retro payments. If your unit does not pass inspection, there is no contract. This means no subsidy money and potentially a tenant that cannot afford your unit.

Q. Why do you send different inspectors every time you inspect?

A. MaineHousing does not have regional offices. Our inspectors travel all over the state. We send whoever is scheduled in your area on the day of the scheduled inspection. This also allows us to ensure quality assurance. All inspectors look for the same inspection items. Each inspector brings their own knowledge and experience which allows them the ability to assure your unit meets the highest standards and requirements.

Q. Why don’t I get notification of all failed items until after the 24-hour inspection?

A. HUD requires us to notify owners within 24 hours of critical fails. The time it takes to process an inspection can take 2-4 days. The complete list of fails is often not available for the owner until after we have already notified you of the 24-hour fails.

You can always contact Inspection Services if you have questions regarding failed items. Have the tenant’s name and address ready when you call, and be specific with your questions. You can also request a copy of the inspection at any time. A scanned copy of the inspection can be provided to you upon request once it is available. Being present at the inspection, or having an agent who is 18 years of age or older present, may help you with getting information about failed items sooner.

Q. I want to move my tenant into another one of my units; I can do that any time I want, right?

A. No! The contract you signed is for the original unit only. If you want to move your tenant to another one of your units, you must notify MaineHousing. We will send you a new Request For Tenancy Approval and perform the same tests we did when the tenant moved into the original unit. Provided the new unit meets affordability standards, and rent reasonableness, an inspection will be requested. The new unit will need a new passed inspection, lease, and contract before the tenant can move in. HUD will not pay on a unit that has not passed inspection.

Q. What is the most I can charge for rent?

A. MaineHousing can not assist you in determining your rent. Look in your community for units of the same quality, bedroom size, and building type. See what other units like yours are going for and use your best judgment. You cannot charge more for the Section 8 rent than your unassisted rents of a similar size and quality.

Q. What happens when a tenant abandons a unit and their things? Will I still get paid from MaineHousing?

A. You need to report a tenant who abandons their unit immediately. You will be able to keep the payment you already received for the month. For example: You receive payment on the 1st, the tenant abandons the unit on the 5th. You have 15 days from the day of notification to report the abandonment of your units as soon as you are aware.

For information on how to handle the property in an abandoned unit, please review Title 14 section 6013 of the Maine Revised Statutes, which can be found at www.mainelegislature.org.

Q. My Section 8 tenant isn’t paying their portion of the rent, is bothering the neighbors, or is being a “bad” tenant. What do I do?

A. Ask yourself: what would I do if the tenant wasn’t a Section 8 tenant? It is important to remember to treat all of your tenants the same, regardless of whether they have a voucher. We cannot enforce your lease.

It is important for you to keep the communication with MaineHousing open. In the event you do give a Section 8 tenant any notices, such as Notice to Quit, Eviction, or other such warning documents, you also need to send a copy to MaineHousing. The tenant may be violating HUD rules and that does require our attention.

Contact us:
HCV Program line
624-5789 or 1-866-357-4853

Toll-free inspections phone line:
1-855-887-6045

A beneficial service to landlords is the new toll-free line for inspections. Do you have questions about the inspections process, a scheduled inspection or the results of a recent inspection? Feel free to call our new toll-free phone number for inspections services.
MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, or familial status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs, and activities. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Louise Patenaude, Maine State Housing Authority, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-4633, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), 207-626-4600 (voice), 1-800-452-4603 (TTY in state only), or 207-623-2985 (TTY), or 7-1-1 (Maine Relay).

Mainely Landlords

MaineHousingSearch.org is a service provided by the Maine State Housing Authority and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Smoke-Free Housing Coalition of Maine, which supports smoke-free housing listings on the registry, and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, which supports the new lead status feature.

You work hard to make your rental properties safe & healthy for your tenants. Now you can advertise your lead-based paint free, lead-safe or lead-maintained units to thousands of prospective renters for FREE. List your properties on MaineHousingSearch.org today.

It’s FREE! Go to MaineHousingSearch.org to list online or call toll-free (877) 428-8844.

Does my property qualify for lead-safe status?
Find details at MaineHousingSearch.org or call Beth Chase at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection at (207) 592-6157.

MaineHousingSearch.org is a service provided by the Maine State Housing Authority and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Smoke-Free Housing Coalition of Maine, which supports smoke-free housing listings on the registry, and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, which supports the new lead status feature.