

VIEWS

Spring 2010

A Newsletter for Housing Owners

Deteriorating Paint Surfaces

The Rules

One of the requirements for all Metro HRA tenant-based subsidy programs, is the assisted unit must pass an annual Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. For units built before 1978, Metro HRA is required by federal regulations (24 CFR Part 35) to cite deteriorated paint (i.e., peeling, chipping, and flaking) surfaces at initial and annual inspections unless you can provide evidence of one of the following:

- The property has undergone a paint inspection in accordance with the regulations and certified to have no lead-based paint.
- The property, in which lead-based paint was identified, has undergone lead abatement and received clearance in accordance with the regulations.
- The property was built after December 31, 1977
- No child under age six (6) resides or is expected to reside in or receives child care in this unit.

Units not meeting one of these criteria will require lead-paint clearances in order to pass the HQS inspection. All interior and exterior lead paint removal work will need to be done by someone certified in Lead-Based Paint Safe Work Practices. Metro HRA offers FREE Safe Work Practices training (2010 schedule in this newsletter).

Lead-based paint requirements apply to unit interior and exterior surfaces associated with the assisted unit as well as common areas servicing the unit. Included are those areas through which residents must pass to gain access to the unit and other areas frequented by resident children less than six (6) years old such as play areas, and child care facilities. Common areas also include garages and fences on the assisted property.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can access a copy of the newly revised Metro HRA Owner's Handbook at www.metrocouncil.org. Go to Housing, Metro HRA, Landlords, Owner Handbook. It's packed with useful information.

Money Saving Tips for Landlords

- **INTERIORS:** Keep walls neutral colors. Using colors that are bright and bold will show nicks and scrapes much more than neutral colors. Also using the same colors throughout the rooms will keep your costs down in labor and knowing what color to use for touch ups. The lower cost paints will fade faster, require more coats to cover, and will not last as long as better quality paint. Using poor quality paint will cost you more in the long run.
- **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Do your research and know what's expected from you and what you can expect from your tenant or the association your property belongs to. This way there is no confusion or dispute about who is required to replace light bulbs, clean carpeting, mow lawns and clear snow, etc. Disputes can be expensive and time consuming and delay or interrupt rent payments.
- **QUALITY COUNTS:** Do-it-yourself stores, big box stores and discount centers offer many supplies and materials at discounted prices. But beware, there is a reason prices are low! The quality of those goods may also be poor and can cost you more in the long run.
- **MINIMIZE REPLACEMENT COSTS:** Many household essentials come in long-life varieties. Smoke alarms, batteries, light bulbs, carpeting and others can be purchased in a long life variety that is more durable and cut costs overall.

Voucher Holders can Afford Different Rents

Landlords often ask why one Section 8 assisted tenant is asked or allowed to pay more, or less, for rent than another tenant even though Metro HRA's subsidy limits (or payment standards) depend on bedroom size. The answer is that while subsidy limits are tied to bedroom size, the actual amount of rent a tenant can afford depends on another variable: Tenant Income.

Section 8 voucher holders are required to pay at least 30%, but not more than 40% of their monthly adjusted income for rent and utilities each month. (Tenant can pay more than 40% after their first year in the same unit). Metro HRA pays a portion of rent to the owner that is large enough to allow tenants to contribute between 30% and 40% of their monthly adjusted income. Tenant income partly determines how much rent they can afford to pay. The more income a tenant receives, the more rent they can pay.

VAWA

Are you familiar with the 'Right of Victims of Domestic Abuse to Terminate the Lease'? Minnesota State Statute 504B.206 is available on line and can explain your rights and the tenant's rights under this Statute. Google the state Statute to learn more.

Is there something you would like to know?

If there are topics you would like to see addressed in upcoming issues of the newsletter, please e-mail them to Mary Dooher at mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us

NOTICE

2010 Safe Work Practices Training

Proof of certification is required before unit can be passed and payment can be made.

Safe Work Practices Training is provided by the Metro HRA and other local housing authorities, to train property owners and their agents on the safe stabilization of lead based paint hazards. Training is required in order for you to perform the work.

This course will cover the requirements of the Tenant-Based Section 8 portion of the Lead Safe Housing Regulation as it relates to maintenance and rehab work. This course is based on HUD's and EPA's "Lead Safety for Remodeling, Repair and Painting" material and incorporates HUD's Lead Paint Safety Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work.

Safe Work Practices Training Sessions are held on Thursdays from 3:00pm to 8:00pm and are scheduled as follows:

- July 15, 2010** – Metro 94 Business Center, St. Paul
- September 9, 2010** – Dakota County CDA, Eagan
- November 4, 2010** – Metro 94 Business Center, St. Paul

The training is **FREE**.

Please call 651-298-5081 or e-mail julianna.quast@pha.org to sign up, for directions or for information.

OWNER BRIEFINGS!

Would you like to know more about the Section 8 rent assistance program but don't know who to ask? Metro HRA can help. We are now offering briefings to provide Landlords/Property Managers with valuable information about the Section 8 program. These briefings offer owners/managers an opportunity to see what is new; ask questions, and network with other property owners. The briefings last approximately one hour, and are offered on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at Metro HRA, 390 North Robert St., St. Paul.

- **June 8**, 10:00 am
- **August 3**, 10:00 am
- **October 12**, 2:00 pm
- **December 14**, 10:00am

For more information or to register contact Mary Dooher at mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1445.

ENERGY STAR

Consider buying ENERGY STAR products next time you replace an appliance. It's good for you and good for the environment. Go to www.energystar.gov for more information.

GO GREEN

Send your name, property name, phone number and e-mail address to mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us and I will add your information to the HRA's e-mail list to receive the owners newsletter and other timely information via e-mail.

What Happens if the Head of Household Dies?

If the Head of Household dies, in a single person household, the rent assistance ends at the end of the month that they died. For example, if Mr Smith lives alone and dies on April 17th, rent assistance ends April 30th. HUD regulations do not allow a Housing Authority to make payment on a unit that is not being occupied by the person or family who is receiving the subsidy.

If the Head of Household dies and there are other household members still remaining in the unit, the Housing Authority may continue housing assistance payments on behalf of those household members, if they qualify for the rent assistance program. The remaining members would be required to complete new paperwork to reflect the current household members and their income, assets and deductions.

Tenants and Foreclosure in Minnesota

The Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act became law in May 2009. This law requires a person or entity who acquires ownership of residential rental property through foreclosure to be legally bound by the Section 8 voucher lease and Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contract until the end of the lease term. A new owner can only terminate the lease and HAP contract by giving the tenant at least 90 days notice prior to the end of the lease. If the lease has less than 90 days remaining in the term, the new owner is still required to give the tenant at least 90 days notice of lease termination.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Metro HRA provides all landlords the opportunity to use the direct deposit system as a voluntary and convenient payment option for receipt of your Housing Assistance payment (HAP). By offering direct deposit, Metro HRA provides you the option of selecting to have these amounts directly deposited into your checking or savings account. Direct deposit is a convenient way to receive your payments and eliminates the delays of mailing and the possibility of lost checks.

To request an enrollment form for direct deposit, or to make a change if you already have direct deposit, please contact Lona Petersen at 651-602-1565 or lona.petersen@metc.state.mn.us.

FREE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

Do you have a vacancy to rent?

HousingLink is the primary distributor of affordable housing information in the Twin Cities. The HousingLink online listing service is easy to use and it is **FREE**. The website is viewed by almost 35,000 people each month and used to list vacancies by over 6,000 landlords. Get the word out through Housing Link! Visit www.housinglink.org, Click on the landlord link and advertise your affordable housing vacancies today.

This website also provides Payment Standard and Utility Allowance information for the Twin Cities area Housing Authorities.

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