



Top 8 Ways to Meet Rental Safety Standards

In an article written by Chris Deziel for [Apartment Manager Magazine](#), the author outlines eight of the best ways to know if your rental property meets safety standards. While certainly not an exhaustive list, he recommends checking the following items during the annual inspection of your unit.

1. Do you have GFI outlets?

The National Electrical Code requires Ground Fault Interrupting outlets (GFIs) in the following locations:

- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Laundry rooms
- Anywhere outside

2. Are there smoke detectors?

It's a good idea to become familiar your state's smoke detector laws. State or local regulations usually specify where the smoke detectors should be located. Check the alarms in your rentals yearly.

3. Are the outdoor railings safe?

If your rental has a deck or balcony, the railings need to be at least 36-42 inches high, depending whether the local governing authority relies on the International Residential Code or the International Building Code. Railings must be able to withstand a minimum shear force, important for Nevada high winds, which is also specified by code.

Wood railings tend to deteriorate over the years, especially in the dry Nevada atmosphere. Wood rots and the bolts holding the posts to the deck fascia work themselves loose. Check the railings on your decks and balconies every year. Tighten loose fasteners and replace rotting wood.

4. How safe are your stairs?

Nobody wants renters, visitors, or anyone else to slip and fall on your stairways or walkways. You can't prevent every accident, but you can minimize the risk by keeping stairs in good repair.

5. Do the doors lock?

A secure exterior door is one with both a locking lockset and a deadbolt. Re-key the locks or change them with every turnover to eliminate circulating spare keys. Discourage renters from duplicating keys and keep a log of the keys that you hand out. Even better, equip the doors with electronic or combination locks.

6. Is that paint safe?

You should be concerned about lead-based paint if your rental was built before 1978. Before that date, lead was a common ingredient in interior paints, and paint containing this toxic metal may be flaking off your old wooden windowsills right now. If your renters have children and the children ingest lead-based paint, they could suffer developmental and neurological problems.



It's in your interest, as well as the interest of your renters, to test painted walls and woodwork for lead. If you get a positive reading, consult a remediation expert to determine the best way to deal with it. According to federal law, you must disclose the presence of lead paint to your renters.

7. Is there a pest infestation?

Besides being a general nuisance, mice, rats, and cockroaches are unsanitary,

can spread disease and generally lower safety standards in the rental. Renters may attract them by leaving food around or failing to clean up, but it's ultimately the landlord's responsibility to get rid of them.

8. Are the appliances maintained?

The dryer tops the list of appliances that need an inspection and possible maintenance at least once a year. For the sake of fire safety and dryer performance, check the lint trap and the vent opening on the side of the house for lint buildup. If you can't feel a steady stream of air from the vent opening when the dryer is on, clean the vent.

Check the lint trap on the washing machine.

Check for water heater leaks. Flush the water heater every three to five years to prevent leaks and maintain its performance.



What You Need to Know About Housing Quality Standards

The RHA follows strict Housing Quality Standards to ensure our residents have a safe, secure place to call home. As a landlord, be secure in the knowledge that we'll inspect your property before a tenant moves in and every two years after that. There's always an *extra set of eyes* on your property, which is especially important for landlords who live far away.

All RHA-approved units must adhere to these qualities:

- Building exterior structure and materials must meet acceptability criteria.
- Ceilings, walls and floors must not have any serious defects, including severe buckling or leaning, large holes, loose surface materials, missing parts or other serious damage.
- The roof must be structurally sound and weatherproof.
- The foundation and exterior wall structure and surface must not be unsound or hazardous and cannot have serious defects including serious leaning, buckling, sagging, or large holes or defects that may result in air or vermin infiltration.
- The condition and equipment of interior and exterior stairs, halls, porches and walkways must not present trip or fall dangers.

Recruiting New HCV Landlords

Our community is seeing record low vacancy rates and continually rising rents. With the limited supply of affordable housing, your participation in the voucher program is vital to ensure housing opportunities to those most in need.

With specialty vouchers available to veterans and foster youth, in addition to traditional vouchers for seniors and families, the RHA values your continued participation and ongoing support to serve our shared clientele.

If you know a landlord who may be interested in taking part in the HCV program, please pass on our contact information.

**New Landlord briefings
every 3rd Wednesday of the month
1:30-3 p.m.
RHA Administrative Office
1525 E. 9th St.**

The briefing provides general information on the voucher program, agency specific information, and answers all questions. No need to RSVP. Just show up and learn how working with the RHA is to *your* benefit!