

Boise City / Ada
County

Housing Authority

Landlord Information
Handbook



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On behalf of all of us at Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority, as well as the clients we serve in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, **Thank you for participating!** It would not be possible to provide this assistance without you and we are most appreciative of your partnership.

In the Ada County area over 2,000 families receive assistance in paying their monthly rent through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. As you can imagine, there are a variety of reasons people need help with their rent and other basic necessities. Economic conditions coupled with catastrophic personal experiences can sometimes be the cause, medical hardship, domestic violence, a lack of education and job skills, and permanent disability are all common contributing factors. As with any societal group, there is a certain percentage of people in need who are there by choice. The users and abusers of systems designed to help, place an unfortunate stigma on the group as a whole. Your participation in this helping program, demonstrates your willingness to delve deeper than the stigma to get to the group truly in need. For that, we thank you.

From a programmatic standpoint, we are working to revise and enhance our processes and procedures to provide continual improvement to our program delivery. We are committed to administering a program that honors your involvement with prompt payment of our portion of the rent and positive and timely response to your needs. Although it is not within our purview to screen tenants for suitability as your renters, we do strive to work with you and the Section 8 participants to make the relationship work as well as it possibly can. Through our work with program participants we have learned something about the barriers they face in trying to become self-sufficient. We recognize that some people will never be able to live completely independent of assistance. Those who are elderly or who have serious disabling conditions fall into that category. For others, we believe there is reason to structure our programs in such a way that we provide a base of encouragement and expectation for seeing Section 8 as a stop along the way to a self-sufficient life. For that reason we do not simply provide monthly rental assistance, we provide programs and links to programs that enable people to develop the tools they need to turn their stumbling blocks into stepping stones. Our Family Self-Sufficiency program is one prime example. This program works with families in a case managed goal setting program that establishes a contract designed to lead the family to self sufficiency within a set time period. It provides an escrow savings account that grows as their income from earnings grows. We also have a Second Chance Renters program designed to address some of the chronic problems our landlord community faces in renting to people both on the open market and in the Section 8 program. Those who fail to pay their rent, those who trash their units, and those who just generally demonstrate through their actions an ignorance of their responsibilities and obligations as tenants, create major problems for you as a landlord, and when they are Section 8 recipients, us as a program administrator. Rather than pass this off as a fact that cannot be changed, we are choosing to approach it as a problem that can be made better. The 2nd Chance Renter program works to train Section 8 tenants with a bad history, to learn and accept their responsibilities, and thereby create a better future. This is done through training programs and performance expectations related to housekeeping, lease compliance, and responsible behavior.

Our Mission at BC/ACHA is to enhance our community by providing safe, affordable housing and by fostering self-sufficiency and stability for people in need. Obviously, we depend upon you to help us meet our mission and serve a critical community need. Together, we fulfill our vision of becoming a model community with progressive housing programs and partnerships that provide help for today and hope for tomorrow. Please know that we value our partnership and appreciate you!

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Watson
Executive Director

Mission Statement

❖ MISSION STATEMENT

- To Enhance our community by providing safe and affordable housing and fostering self-sufficiency and stability for people in need.

❖ VISION STATEMENT

- A Model Community with Progressive Housing Programs and Partnerships that provide Help for Today and Hope for Tomorrow.

❖ AGENCY HISTORY

- The Boise City Housing Authority was created in 1967 for the original purpose of providing “low income housing for the aged.” The first projects developed by the Boise City Housing Authority were two high-rise apartment complexes built in 1970 through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Low Rent Public Housing Program. The complexes were designed to provide affordable housing for low-income elderly residents.
- In 1976, the Ada County Housing Authority was created. Our organization then became known by its current name, the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority. The jurisdictional boundaries of the agency expanded from the Boise city limits to the outlying areas and communities of Ada County.

❖ FUTURE GOALS

- The Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority is committed to seek additional funding and development opportunities in order to provide affordable housing opportunities in the community. Our agency will continue to pursue traditional and innovative funding avenues in order to meet this goal.

Introduction

This owner handbook is designed to provide rental property owners, managers, and caretakers with information needed to successfully participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Currently, approximately 2100 families in Ada County are receiving assistance each month with their rent payments through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program administered by the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority (BC/ACHA). Section 8 is a federal housing rental program funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is a three-way partnership between property owners, tenant families, and the BC/ACHA.

Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority

- Determines applicant's/participant's assistance level
- Issues Housing Choice Voucher to applicant/participant
- Supplies applicant/participant with Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA)
- Approves subsidy and rent reasonableness
- Approves rent and lease
- Performs Housing Quality Standards inspection
- Prepares lease addendum and contract
- Issues housing assistance payment to landlord
- Subsidizes Rent

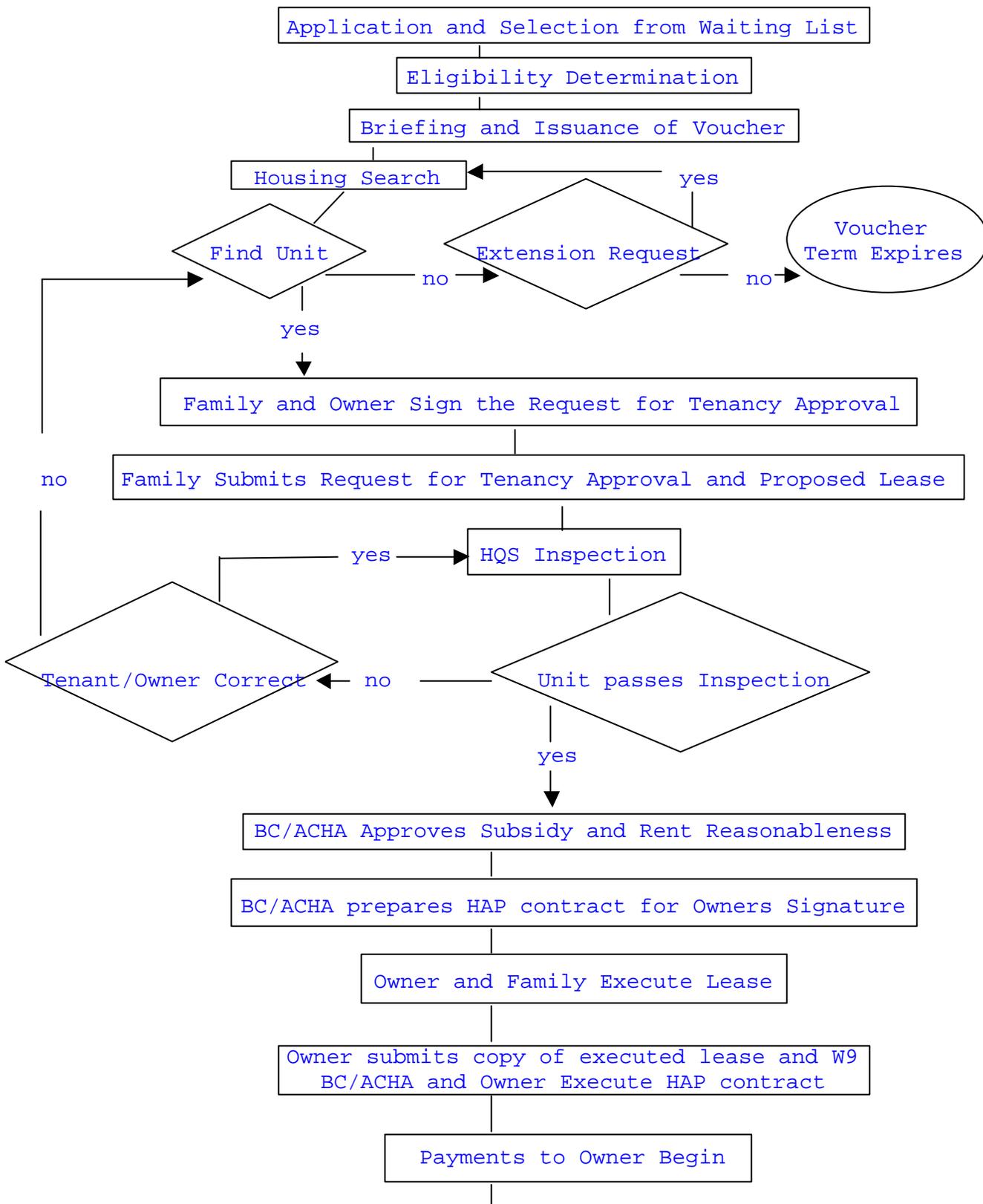
Landlord

- Shows available unit
- Screens prospective tenants
- Approves tenant
- Completes RFTA form
- Provides proposed lease
- Signs contract and lease addendum
- Enforces terms of lease

Applicant/Participant

- Contacts owner for unit
- Expresses interest in renting unit
- Completes RFTA with owner and returns it to BC/ACHA
- Pays Security Deposit
- Abides by terms of the lease
- Complies with Family Obligations as listed on Housing Choice Voucher

Steps to Assisted Tenancy



Annual Reexamination, HQS Inspection and Rent
Reasonableness Determination

Frequently Asked Questions

HOW DO APPLICANTS APPLY FOR SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE?

Applications for rental assistance can be picked up at the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority's office located at 1276 W. River St. Suite 300, Boise, ID 83702 (208) 345-4907 or downloaded from our website at www.bcacha.org. Persons requiring assistance with completing their application should contact the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority.

To be eligible for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, a family's annual gross household income must not exceed 50% of the area median income.

Due to the large demand for rental assistance in the community, and a limited amount of funding, applicants are placed on a waiting list for assistance. The waiting list for assistance runs from approximately 18-36 months, depending upon the amount of funding received by the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority.

DO YOU OFFER EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE?

Unfortunately, the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority does not offer emergency rental assistance.

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS PLACED ON THE WAITING LIST?

Applications are placed on the waiting list as of the date and time the application is submitted to the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority and is date-stamped into our office. The Housing Authority will select families based on the following local preferences based on local housing needs and priorities:

- Public housing residents who are under or over-housed.
- Participants currently being assisted by a grant program with limited funding.
- A household whose head or co-head (or at least one adult member) is working at least 20 hours per week, with verifiable income or whose head or co-head is participating in a Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority recognized job preparedness/self sufficiency program or a household whose head or co-head is either elderly (62 or older, and/or handicapped and unable to work.)
- A household whose head is single and has a child in the household under the age of six (6).
- A single or two-person elderly, disabled, or displaced household.
- A head of household or co-head that is fleeing their home due to domestic violence.

All other households on the waiting list without a local preference will be considered non-preference families and will be assisted in the order of the date and time of their application only after ALL local preference households have been assisted.

Frequently Asked Questions Cont.

WHAT KIND OF UNIT CAN BE RENTED?

Virtually any kind of decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling unit can be rented. Units can include apartments, duplexes, single family homes and manufactured homes. The unit must also be “rent reasonable.”

HOW MUCH DOES THE PARTICIPANT CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS RENT?

Section 8 participants generally contribute between 30% and 40% of their monthly adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities. The Housing Authority pays the balance directly to the owner. At initial lease up, the family’s portion of rent and utility expenses cannot exceed 40% of the families’ adjusted monthly income.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER TO LANDLORDS?

Landlords are guaranteed a portion of the rent which is mailed by BC/ACHA on the first business day of the month. The intent of the program is to lessen the burden on the family’s budget for housing costs, helping them to better afford their rental portion, resulting in a more consistent, timely and full payment to owners. Additionally, an annual inspection of the unit helps alert landlords of required and/or recommended repairs; ideally, timely maintenance will reduce costly investments. Although tenant screening is the landlord’s responsibility, BC/ACHA will also release information to prospective landlords with current and previous information for a Section 8 participant, if available.

DOES THE BC/ACHA SCREEN FAMILIES FOR TENANCY?

BC/ACHA does **NOT** screen participants for rental/credit history. Tenant screening and selection is the responsibility of the landlord. BC/ACHA recommends that the owner check references of all applicants (assisted and non-assisted) for past rental history. Information known to BC/ACHA of the tenant’s current and previous landlord will be provided to a prospective landlord upon request.

CAN A LANDLORD OBTAIN ADDITIONAL RENTAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FAMILY FROM BC/ACHA?

YES, if the family provides BC/ACHA with a written release of information form.

Frequently Asked Questions Cont.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE SECTION 8 PROGRAM?

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program assists very low-income households. The Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority selects families/individuals who meet income and eligibility guidelines. A participating applicant may choose to remain in the unit they are currently living in or move to a unit anywhere in Ada County.

HOW IS RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED?

BC/ACHA calculates the amount of assistance each family receives. The level of assistance is based upon family size, income, and current reasonable market rents. A household is expected to pay 30% to 40% of its income toward the monthly rent and utilities. Each month, BC/ACHA makes housing assistance payments directly to the landlord to make up the difference.

WHAT ARE THE TENANT'S RENT RESPONSIBILITIES?

The renter must pay all rent and utilities that are not covered by the lease. Because the family is receiving assistance, the rent burden should be reduced, enabling the family to pay rent more easily and on time. Renters must pay their rent on time according to the terms of their lease.

WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF THE LEASE?

A written lease is required. The initial term must be 1 year. Thereafter, the term may be month to month, 6 months, 1 year, etc., and must be agreed upon by the landlord and tenant. BC/ACHA must review and approve the lease. BC/ACHA must also attach the HUD Tenancy Addendum.

WHAT IF THE LANDLORD WANTS TO TERMINATE THE LEASE?

The property owner may terminate the lease if the tenant violates the lease, or for other good cause. The owner and the renter can decide to mutually terminate the lease at any time.

IS A LANDLORD REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SECTION 8 PROGRAM?

A landlord has the same right of tenant selection with regard to Section 8 participants as other applicants. Fair Housing laws prohibit housing discrimination based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability.

Frequently Asked Questions Cont.

WHAT IF THE RENTER VACATES THE UNIT IN VIOLATION OF THE LEASE?

The property owner may retain the security deposit for the amount of unpaid rent and any damages caused to the unit.

HOW MUCH MAY A LANDLORD CHARGE FOR SECURITY DEPOSIT?

The landlord is allowed to charge a security deposit similar to what is charged to other fair market tenants. Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority does not pay all or part of any security deposit. It is the applicant's/participant's responsibility to pay security deposits.

DOES THE SECTION 8 PARTICIPANT HAVE TO MOVE IF THE LANDLORD/OWNER SELLS THE UNIT WHILE UNDER A CURRENT LEASE?

No, the family does not have to move in the middle of a lease. To ensure continuing and timely payments, landlords must notify BC/ACHA when the ownership of properties participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program changes. The landlord must complete a "Change of Ownership" form, which transfers the rights and obligations of the HAP Contract to the new landlord, and the landlord must sign the form agreeing to comply with the terms and conditions of the HAP contract.

Additionally, BC/ACHA should be notified of a landlord's change of mailing address and/or a change in the management company.

To notify the BC/ACHA, please contact a Housing Representative at (208) 345-4907.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A UNIT "FAILS" THE MOVE-IN INSPECTION?

Under Federal regulations, a unit either "passes" or "fails". Any item that does not meet the standards will cause a unit to fail. The owner will be notified, in writing, if the unit "fails". The landlord determines whether he/she is willing to make the repairs and informs the applicant/participant and BC/ACHA of this decision. If the landlord decides to make repairs, he/she will have thirty (30) days to complete them.

If the landlord elects not to make repairs, the applicant **must** choose another unit to receive assistance. This is why the applicant should not move into a unit and sign a lease without first having the unit **pass** the HQS Inspection.

Frequently Asked Questions Cont.

WHEN DOES BC/ACHA MAIL RENT PAYMENTS?

It is the policy of the BC/ACHA to mail rent payments on the first business day of the month.

The landlord may receive payment late the first month of assisted occupancy due to delayed processing affected by the completion of the inspection and signing of lease/contract documents.

WHAT SHOULD A LANDLORD DO IF HE/SHE HAS A QUESTION ABOUT THE AMOUNT OR RECEIPT OF A PAYMENT?

Contact the BC/ACHA Housing Representative assigned to the participant. His or her name will appear on the paperwork received from the BC/ACHA.

WHAT SHOULD THE LANDLORD DO IF HE/SHE SUSPECTS A FRAUDULENT SITUATION REGARDING THE INCOME OR HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF AN ASSISTED TENANT?

Contact the Housing Representative assigned to the participant at BC/ACHA. The Housing Authority is seriously concerned about any fraud or abuse of the program. We ask for the landlord and manager's help in ending any fraudulent situations.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PARTICIPANT "SKIPS" OR VACATES A UNIT IN VIOLATION OF THEIR NOTICE REQUIREMENTS?

Assistance for participants who leave their unit in violation of their lease term may be terminated from the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Please notify the participant's Housing Representative of this event.

WHOSE LEASE DOCUMENT IS USED?

BC/ACHA encourages landlords to use their own lease, provided that it is consistent with Idaho State law. If you do not have a model lease, BC/ACHA has a lease agreement you may use.

The initial term of the lease must be for 12 months. A landlord participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program may terminate tenancy without cause at the end of the initial lease term or at the end of the successive renewal term.

Frequently Asked Questions Cont.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF A LANDLORD HAS A RENTAL UNIT HE/SHE WISHES TO RENT TO A SECTION 8 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT?

The landlord should contact a Client Service Representative at BC/ACHA, (208) 345-4907. The Client Service Representative will take the information regarding the unit and place the information in a book that is easily accessed by participants looking for a unit. We also suggest newspaper ads include “Section 8 Vouchers accepted.”

We can also list the rental unit on our website at www.bcacha.org.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF A FAMILY WANTS TO MOVE TO ANOTHER UNIT WITHIN THE SAME BUILDING/COMPLEX OR ANOTHER BUILDING/COMPLEX?

The tenant is required to give the landlord and BC/ACHA a 30-day written notice of its intention to move. BC/ACHA must re-verify income, re-establish rent portions, execute new documents and inspect the new unit.

HOW DOES BC/ACHA HANDLE ISSUES RELATED TO OUTSTANDING CLAIMS AGAINST A TENANT AT LEASE TERMINATION?

The contract between BC/ACHA and landlords does not include provisions for tenant caused damages and/or vacancy loss. However, landlords may collect security deposits from Section 8 participants that are up to, but not greater than, the amount they would collect from an unassisted tenant.

Section 8 Landlord Benefits

A Relationship of Mutual Benefit

Being a Section 8 landlord can give you the satisfaction of making it possible for very low-income families to enjoy decent, safe and sanitary housing. Landlords benefit as well by enjoying the following aspects of the program:

- Owners may use their own leases. The initial lease term must be for one year.
- Owners get rent security
- Yearly inspections of the unit
- Fair market rental rates – units must be rent reasonable
- Strict renter responsibilities defined in the tenancy addendum
- On-time payments from BC/ACHA

Applicants/Participants are issued a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher permitting them to find suitable housing of their choice from private market landlords who are interested in participating in the program. BC/ACHA pays a set amount, directly to the landlord, and the renter pays the difference. Other than expecting a portion of the rent regularly each month from the Housing Authority, you have the same type of renter/landlord relationship that you have with non-Section 8 renters.

Overview of Housing Quality Standards

The federal regulation for the program stipulates that each unit shall meet basic “Performance Requirements” with respect to the following:

Sanitary facilities
Space and security
Illumination and electricity
Interior air quality
Lead-Based paint
Site and neighborhood

Food preparation and storage space
Thermal environment
Structure and materials
Water supply
Access
Sanitary condition

SPECIFICS:

Dwelling Unit: must have a minimum of a living room, kitchen area, bathroom, and one living/sleeping room for every two family members.

Bathroom: must have a flush toilet, fixed basin and a tub or shower with hot and cold water, an operable window or fan vented from the outside, and a ceiling or wall type light fixture.

Kitchen: must have a stove or range, a refrigerator, a sink with hot and cold water, space for storage, preparation and serving of food, facilities for sanitary disposal of food wastes, a ceiling or wall type light fixture, and one electrical outlet.

Living/sleeping rooms: must have two (2) electrical outlets or one light fixture and one electrical outlet, and a window.

Ceilings, walls, floors, and windows: must be in good condition. There cannot be any large cracks or peeling and or chipping paint or plaster. All windows that can be opened must open and close, they cannot have cracked, broken, or missing panes, and, if accessible from the outside (normally first floor), must be lockable.

Porches, balconies, and decks: if more than thirty (30) inches above the ground, must have a rail 36 inches high. All stairs (interior and exterior) with four (4) or more steps must have a handrail.

Smoke Detectors: must be present and functioning within the immediate vicinity of each sleeping area and on each level of the dwelling unit regardless of whether there are bedrooms on each level.

Site and Neighborhood: must be free from conditions, which could endanger the health, life and/or safety of residents. The unit must be free of insect and rodent infestation.

Surfaces: must be free of cracking, scaling, peeling, chipping, and loose paint or be adequately treated or covered to prevent the exposure of residents to lead based paint hazards.

Overview of Housing Quality Standards Cont.

MOST COMMON FAILED ITEMS:

- Nonfunctioning Smoke Detectors – A smoke detector is required within the immediate vicinity of **EACH** sleeping area.
- Peeling and/or chipping paint (exterior and interior)
- Burners on kitchen stove/range not operating as designed
- Leaking faucets/plumbing
- Carpet and vinyl condition – safety issue
- Missing or cracking electrical switch plates and outlet covers
- Cracked and/or broken window panes
- Bathrooms without a window or operational exhaust fan
- Railings on four or more steps not present

Important: If the unit was originally built before 1977 and the tenant has children at the age of six (6) or under, no defective or peeling paint surfaces are allowed on either the exterior or interior. If the rental unit has chipped or peeling paint, abatement is required. The landlord has thirty (30) days to complete the abatement. Landlords renting units built prior to 1977 will be required to give an *EPA Lead-Based Paint* brochure to tenant with small children. Tenant families must sign a letter acknowledging that they have been informed of the risk associated with lead-based paint.

Directions for Request for Tenancy Approval

The landlord and family must fill out the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA) together. All information needs to be filled in. Incomplete sections may cause a delay in scheduling the inspection. The following steps are instructions on what to fill in each area of the RFTA:

1. Name of the Public Housing Agency – should already be filled in
 - a. Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority

1. Address of unit - complete address of unit needing inspected, including zip code

2. Requested Beginning Date of Lease - Date on which Tenant anticipates move in

3. Number of Bedrooms

4. Year Constructed – if unknown, call Ada County Assessors office (364-2400)

5. Proposed Rent

6. Security Deposit

7. Date Unit Available for Inspection

8. Type of House/Apartment

9. If this unit is subsidized, indicate type of subsidy

10. Utilities and Appliances
 - a. specify fuel type for heating, cooking and water heater by putting an “X” in the appropriate box.
 - b. indicate “O” owner or “T” for tenant in the provided by/paid by columns – **ALL** blocks must be filled in

1. Answer questions A through C completely

2. Read 13 through 15

3. Complete landlord information box. Input a phone number to best contact you. (ie., work/cell/home)

Once the RFTA is completed, have the tenant bring the form into the office as soon as possible as it may take **several days** for an inspection to be scheduled. Please be patient as the inspector usually has a full calendar. Your prospective unit will be inspected as soon as possible.