

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

On Closer Inspection The Inside Scoop on Rental Property Inspections

This issue is all about Rental Assistance property inspections. Required by HUD, inspections help keep kids and adults safe from dangers such as lead paint, fire hazards and unsanitary cooking conditions. They also help protect owners against potential lawsuits and help catch problems before they become costly.

Most inspections are either “move-ins” or as part of the tenants’ annual recertification. With move-in inspections (which also check for rent reasonableness), the Housing Commission calls to set up the inspection in response to receiving the completed Request for Tenancy Approval Form.

For “recerts,” the tenant receives a letter indicating the inspection date. To learn if it will be morning or afternoon, call 619.578.7650 that morning. For questions about inspections in general, go sdhc.net or write to ownerinfo@sdhc.net.

On the day of their inspection, property owner Imelda de la Torre shares a laugh with her new tenants – Maria Morales and children. (Dad, Martin Rivera, was away at work.) The house they’re renting was purchased by Imelda and her family in February. It was their first real estate investment and first experience with the Rental Assistance Program. Imelda said that having someone come out to do a health and safety inspection was very helpful. This was one of several inspections conducted by the Housing Commission’s Steve Callow on a recent morning (see next story).



The Schroeder family can’t wait to move in. Left to right: Jean Carlo (13), Samantha (11) and Sean (5) camp out in picnic chairs while their new home is getting inspected.

A Day in the Field With “Inspector Steve”

Perhaps you’ve met Steve Callow on one of his daily treks to inspect properties rented with vouchers. The 17-year agency veteran says he really enjoys being able to go out and meet with owners and renters. Such was the case on a recent morning when he set out to south San Diego.

His first stop was a “move-in” inspection at an Otay Mesa house. It passed inspection and the proposed rent rate was fine, so the family – Susan and Joe Schroeder and their three children – started moving in that day.

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Steve Callow wraps up his inspection report while tenant Susan Schroeder looks on. Moments before, he had unjammed the garbage disposal, helping ensure the house would pass inspection.

Inspectors' Gadget – Laser “Measuring Tape” Among Items in Bag of Tricks

Ever wonder why most inspections take just minutes? One reason is, of course, that the agency's inspectors are skilled and experienced. But another reason is that they tote a variety of handy tools and gadgets. From smoke alarms to batteries and flashlights to outlet covers and switchplates, an inspector's “bag of tricks” is always well stocked. For example, they carry the latest in high-tech gadgetry – such as the laser measuring device shown here or “circuit analyzers” used to see if homes are wired correctly.

Having such items on hand not only speeds up inspections but can help a unit pass when simple-to-solve problems stand in the way. Such was the case in the front page photo, in which Steve Callow didn't let a clogged disposal stand in the way of the house passing inspection.



A Day in the Field

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Next up was another move-in – this time a “re-inspection” at a house that did not previously pass due to loose carpeting. There, Steve noted that the problem had been resolved (by installing inexpensive tack strips between doorways) – and gave them a “green light.” Other stop-offs that morning included a couple of “recert re-inspections” (where he needed to go back to some homes to make sure peeling paint and broken glass problems were resolved).



Susan and Joe Schroeder graduated from UCSD in June. That same month, they began efforts to move their family (with a Rental Assistance voucher) from their apartment near the university to an Otay Mesa house. Joe is a former Navy Seal who retired from the military following a diving accident. Both he and his wife returned to college to finish their educations.

Inspection Connection

Former owner liaison Lynda Brophy – now the Rental Assistance department's inspection supervisor – offers the following “kitchen inspection tips”:

- Sink and faucet** – Faucet runs both hot and cold water with no leaks and turns off completely. Also, there shouldn't be any holes in the wall or under the sink.
- Stove** – Should be clean with all knobs present. Burners and oven must work (and light up automatically if gas).
- All surfaces** (counters, cabinets, etc.) should be clean.
- Refrigerator** – Should be working and clean. If freezer is inside a box refrigerator, the door should latch closed. Overhead light fixture must work.
- Cabinet** – Doors secure and drawers sliding freely.
- Appliances and fixtures** – Appliances and fixtures (disposal, range vent hood, dishwasher) must work.

For more information, including a complete inspections check-off list, go to sdhc.net and click on “Got housing to rent?” Plus, stay tuned for more tips in the next VIEWpoint.



VIEWpoint is published by the Rental Assistance Department as a way to keep rental owners/managers updated on issues and policies regarding our programs. If you have any ideas for future stories – or if you would like extra issues sent to your staff – please contact Community Relations Specialist Janine Rojas at janiner@sdhc.org.



Good Neighbors
**San Diego
Housing Commission**

- ◆ 1625 Newton Avenue
- ◆ San Diego, California
- ◆ 92113-1038
- ◆ www.sdhc.net



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