

Dear Resident:

I would like to welcome you to your new home and community. The Board of Commissioners and staff of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) sincerely hope that you will enjoy your stay with us. DCHA is committed to creating and maintaining Clean, Livable, Attractive, Safe and Sustainable (CLASS) living environments. Our objective is to promote stable and healthy communities that are a source of self-sufficiency and upward mobility.

This resident handbook gives you information you will need before you move in. It also tells you about DCHA's management, staff, policies and procedures, how to care for your home, how to request maintenance service, what is expected from you as a resident and what you may expect from us. The information will help you enjoy your new home and to be a good neighbor.

Welcome home!

Adrienne Todman  
Executive Director  
District of Columbia Housing Authority

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**Section I. What You Should Know About Moving in**

Your Housing Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. YOUR NEW HOME**

The home you accepted meets your needs based on your family size and special requirements determined by our Client Placement Division. **Only** members of your family listed on your lease are permitted to live in your home. Guests and friends are welcomed. If they plan to stay for more than 10 days, however, you must obtain written permission from your housing manager

in advance.

## **B. PRE-OCCUPANCY INSPECTION**

When you move into your home, a member of the housing management staff will conduct a Move-in inspection with you. The purpose of this inspection is to record the condition of the home. A copy of the inspection report will be provided to you for your records. DCHA will conduct a formal inspection two times a year to identify any maintenance problems and to determine the overall condition of your home and appliances. An inspection also will take place when you move out of your unit or transfer to another unit.

## **C. YOUR NEW LEASE**

Prior to moving into your new home, you will be required to sign a lease agreement. The lease is a very important legal document. It outlines your responsibilities as the resident and the responsibilities of DCHA as the landlord. Please read it and store it in a safe place.

## **D. YOUR KEYS**

You will receive one set of keys to your home. If applicable, you will also receive a key to the front entry door and your mailbox. The Management Office will maintain a spare key to your home at all times. Be careful with your key – if you lose it, you will be charged for a replacement.

## **E. MOVING DAY**

Moving day may be arranged with the Housing Manager after you have signed your Lease Agreement. You and the Manager will conduct an inspection of your new home before you move into it. The Manager will answer your specific questions and offer suggestions on where to park and which entrance and/or elevator to use.

On moving day, keep an eye on your furniture and articles at all times. Never leave them where they are a safety or traffic problem. Take care not to damage the walls, doors, elevators or sprinkler heads when moving large pieces of furniture. Please remember: if you have more furniture than space, you may have to reduce the amount of your furnishings. A cluttered, crowded home could be hazardous.

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## **E. COMMUNITY LIVING STANDARDS**

Community Living Standards are written jointly by DCHA and your Resident Council, an organization elected by the tenants at your property. The standards provide guidance on community conduct and the use of common area spaces. The rules are not designed to prohibit any reasonable activity, but they are in place to protect the peaceful enjoyment of the property by all.

Community Living Standards are enforceable under terms of the lease. Please read them and abide by them. They are posted and available in your Management Office.

## **Section II. Lease Requirements**

### **A. YOUR RENT**

Rent is due on the first day of each month. Mail your rent check in enough time to arrive on the first. **Cash will not be accepted at the property.** If your rent is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, you will be charged a late fee. A returned check fee will be assessed for all checks that are returned due to insufficient funds. The list of fees is posted in the management office.

**Your check or money order must include your lease number and Social Security Number.**

Mail all rental payments to: Wachovia Bank District of Columbia Housing Authority  
P.O. Box 17328 Baltimore, Md. 21298-8367

If your rent is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, you will receive a notice that your lease will be terminated in thirty days.

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## **B. ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION**

Once each year, you will receive an application for continued occupancy. This application is used to determine your continued eligibility for participation in the Public Housing program and to determine your new monthly rent charge. You **must** fill out the application completely and return it to the Management Office at your property within 30 days after you receive the forms in the mail. **Failure to return the completed application within the time frame allotted will result in the issuance of a 30-day termination notice.**

## **C. TRANSFERS**

If your family size increases or decreases you **may** be eligible for a home of a different size. Please contact your Property Manager for additional information on the DCHA transfer policy.

## **D. TERMINATING YOUR LEASE**

If you plan to move, you should notify your property manager at least thirty (30) days before your move. A notice of "Intent to Vacate" will be prepared for your signature. Make sure you do the following:

- . • Pay all outstanding charges and rent in full.
- . • Clean your home and remove all trash and personal items.
- . • Conduct the move-out inspection with your manager.
- . • Return keys to your manager.
- . • Sign the vacate form.

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed being a part of the DCHA family and that your time with us was beneficial. Please follow these move-out instructions so that a family waiting for housing can move in as quickly as possible.

### **SECTION III. Maintaining Your Apartment**

#### **A. RENTER’S INSURANCE**

We strongly recommend that you buy a renter’s insurance policy to protect your personal property from loss.

Renters insurance will cover damages that may result from theft, accidents, fire, flooding and other perils. Contact your insurance agent immediately for more information.

#### **B. MAINTENANCE SERVICE**

DCHA will provide preventive and routine maintenance service to your home and DCHA-owned appliances. If repairs are due to ordinary wear and tear, the Housing Authority will absorb the cost for the repairs. You will be charged for repairs that are necessary due to abuse or neglect by you, your household members, guests or visitors.

Regular maintenance service is provided from 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Emergencies that are a threat to life, safety or property are handled beyond normal work hours. These emergencies include:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Fire</b>                | <b>Electrical Sparks</b>      |
| <b>No water</b>            | <b>No Electricity</b>         |
| <b>No working toilet</b>   | <b>No Elevator Service</b>    |
| <b>No heat</b>             | <b>Serious Flooding</b>       |
| <b>No air conditioning</b> | <b>Gas Leak</b>               |
| <b>(senior buildings)</b>  | <b>Unit cannot be secured</b> |

#### **Locked out (senior buildings)**

Please contact the Maintenance Command Center at 535-1044 or 535-1749 to report all routine and emergency maintenance requests.

## **C. SMOKE DETECTORS**

Smoke detectors are a very important household safety item. You should check your smoke detectors twice a year to make sure they work. A good time to check your smoke detector is at the start and end of Daylight Savings Time (April & October).

**DO NOT DISCONNECT THE SMOKE DETECTOR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.** If you have problems with your smoke detector, please call your management office immediately to have the smoke detector repaired or replaced.

## **D. PEST CONTROL**

An effective pest control program requires **the cooperation of all residents** within your property. DCHA conducts fumigation or extermination on a regular basis. You will receive advance notice when an exterminator is scheduled to visit your unit. Make certain that you are prepared by following the instructions provided by your manager. In order to control pests, your home must be treated when scheduled.

You can help control pests by maintaining a clean home, cleaning food from countertops and properly storing all food away in the refrigerator or closed cabinets. Trash and garbage should be disposed of every day in the proper container.

## **E. ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Follow these energy-saving tips:

- . • Turn off lights, radio, TV, computers, etc. when not in use.
- . • Allow heat to circulate, do not block radiators with furniture.
- . • Report leaky hot/cold water faucets or toilets immediately.

## **AIR CONDITIONERS**

You may be able to install a window air conditioning unit in your home. Your housing manager can help you complete a request form.



A fee is charged for use of air conditioners.

## **F. HOUSEKEEPING**

### **1. Kitchens: Electric or Gas Range**

Your electric or gas range will work and look its best if you follow some simple suggestions.

Your range should be cleaned with a mild soap and damp cloth. Rinse with a damp cloth and wipe the finish dry. For your safety, a range should **never** be used to heat your home.

You can remove the burners from a **GAS** stove and soak them in warm soapy water for cleaning. Dry thoroughly before using them again.

### **2. Bathrooms**

Toilets and tanks should be clean and odor free. Wire-type deodorizers are prohibited. Tubs and showers should be cleaned with a mild detergent and free of excessive mold and mildew. Where applicable, shower curtains should be in place and of adequate length. Exhaust fans should be operable and free of dust.

### **3. Wall Care**

The walls of your home are in clean and good condition when you move in. A mild soap with warm water will remove light stains. Please do not install wallpaper, contact paper, paneling or change the color paint without written permission from your housing manager. This policy is strictly enforced, and you will be charged if extra work is required to remove wallpaper, paneling, and contact paper or to paint over an unauthorized color paint.

### **4. Floor Care**

Regular washing, rinsing, and waxing will keep your floor looking attractive. You may use carpets or rugs that are **not glued or nailed down.**

No linoleum, please!

### **5. Plumbing and Drain Care**

Plumbing fixtures, pipes, and drains should provide trouble free service with the cooperation of all residents. In order to avoid inconvenient plumbing problems, please follow these simple rules:

## **MAINTENANCE TIPS**

### **DO:**

- . • Keep a toilet plunger in your home.
- . • Keep the toilet cover down when not in use.
- . • Protect empty electrical outlets with safety plugs if there are young children in the house.

### **DON'T:**

- . • Put anything other than human waste or toilet paper in your toilet. Do not flush tampons or paper towels.
- . • Use your stove to heat your unit.
- . • Pour grease or coffee grounds down the drain.
- . • Use Dranoor similar liquids.
- . • Plug an air conditioner or large appliance into an extension cord.

## **Resident Responsibilities**

If you follow the preventive measures listed below, you can avoid unnecessary damage to household fixtures and appliances.

### **Monthly (every 30 days)**

- Check your toilet and make sure it is flushing OK. Report continued slow draining to management immediately.
- . • Check all faucets for signs of dripping.
- . • Test smoke and/or carbon monoxide alarms.

Contact the maintenance command center if you find any of these problems.

### **Annually (Every Year)**

- Replace batteries in smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors. Contact management if they do not work.
- Disconnect the duct connected to the dryer (if you have one) and vacuum lint from duct, the areas surrounding your clothes dryer and your dryer's vent hood outside.

## **Section IV. Outside Your Apartment**

### **A. TRASH AND GARBAGE DISPOSAL**

For your family's health and safety, drain garbage, wrap it tightly in trash bags or newspaper and place it in a nearby dumpster unit or trash receptacle at least two times a week.

A household member responsible enough to place refuse inside the dumpster properly should carry trash and garbage to the dumpster. Please ensure that all garbage is tightly sealed in plastic garbage bags, zip lock bags, or newspapers to avoid unwanted smells and rodent infestation in the buildings.

Many developments designed for the elderly or persons with disabilities are equipped with trash chutes. For your health and the health of your neighbors, **never leave** trash or garbage in the hallway or outside your home entry door. Do not drop large or bulky items in the trash chute.

Large household items such as chairs, washing machines and other bulk items can be discarded by contacting the management office to arrange for a special pick-up date and time.

### **B. AUTOMOBILES (PARKING)**

Parking is restricted to designated areas and by permit only. You must register your vehicle with the Management Office to get a parking sticker.

Residents must obtain a DCHA parking permit to park anywhere on DCHA property. Parking permits will be issued to only one vehicle per household. All vehicles must be fully operational, bear a valid DC inspection sticker and be properly registered to a member of the household on the lease at the public housing address.

## **C. PETS**

No pets are permitted on DCHA premises, except those that are registered with the property manager in senior/disabled buildings. DCHA residents or potential residents who need a service animal as a reasonable accommodation must request the accommodation in accordance with the reasonable accommodation policy established by the housing authority.

## **Section V. Public Safety and Security**

### **A. Fire Safety**

For your safety and that of your neighbors, please follow these rules:

- . • do not overload electrical outlets
- . • keep combustibles clear of electrical heaters
- . • never smoke in bed
- . • do not store flammable materials in your home
- . • keep paper goods and other flammables away from oven burners
- . • do not run electric cords under rugs
- . • make sure smoking materials are out before disposing of them
- . • keep matches away from children and store them out of their reach

### **B. Personal Safety**

- . • Always be aware of your surroundings
- . • Do not carry large sums of money or valuables
- . • If you see activity that is suspicious, please call the police

### **C. Home Security**

- . • Ensure that your home is safe by conducting a safety check; check windows and doors for proper and functional locks.
- . • Never leave windows and doors unlocked when you leave home and keep your keys in your possession at all times.

## **Section VI. Resident Services**

### **RESIDENT COUNCILS & RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD**

Residents are urged to join and become active in the Resident Council serving your home community. The association works with the Housing Authority in a variety of important areas to promote resident involvement and participation such as lease review, modernization planning

and grievance committee.

**The Resident Council serving your community is:**

**RESIDENT COUNCIL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESIDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY-WIDE RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICE ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE NUMBER: (202) \_\_\_\_\_ MEETING DATE & TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **C. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

DCHA works with many employers and agencies to encourage hiring of our residents. For your convenience, all employment opportunities are posted on DCHA bulletin boards and distributed through Resident Council Offices.

The DCHA Office of Human Resources would be pleased to provide additional information and answer any questions that you may have concerning employment opportunities. They can be reached at (202) 535-1618.

## **Section VII. Reasonable Accommodations**

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

Residents of public housing have the right to request a reasonable accommodation if you or a current member of your household has a disability.

#### **A. What is a reasonable accommodation?**

A Reasonable Accommodation is a change, modification, or alteration to your unit or an adaptation in a policy, procedure, practice, program, or facility that provides a person with a disability the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, a program (housing or non-housing) or activity. It includes, modifying your unit to add accessible features or providing a fully accessible unit for your family.

## **B. Who can receive a reasonable accommodation?**

The Reasonable Accommodation Policy applies to qualified individual with disabilities in the following programs provided by the DCHA:

1. 1. Applicants of public housing.
2. 2. Applicants of all Housing Choice Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs.
3. 3. Residents of public housing developments.
4. 4. Participants of the Housing Choice Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs.
5. 5. Participants in all other programs or activities receiving federal funds that are conducted or sponsored by DCHA, its agents or contractors including all non-housing facilities and common areas owned or operated by DCHA.

## **C. Who is a person with a disability?**

A person with a disability has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include functions such as caring for ones self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

## **D. What are some examples of reasonable accommodations for public housing residents?**

- . • Making a DCHA unit, part of a unit or public and common areas wheelchair accessible for a household member with a disability that is on the lease.
- . • Installing strobe type flashing light smoke detectors and lights or other such equipment in a DCHA housing unit for a family member with a hearing impairment.
- . • Permitting a family to have a service or assistance animal necessary to assist a household member with a disability.
- . • Allowing a live-in aid to reside in an appropriately sized DCHA unit.
- . • Transferring a resident to a larger size unit to provide a separate bedroom for a person with a disability.
- . • Transferring a resident to a unit on a lower level or a unit that is completely on one level.

## **E. When can I make a reasonable accommodation request?**

A person with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation at any time. All requests must be submitted in writing by the individual, a DCHA staff member or any person identified by the individual on the Reasonable Accommodation Request Forms which can be found in the management office.

## **F. How does a public housing resident apply for a reasonable accommodation?**

You may get a “Request for Reasonable Accommodation” form from your property manager. DCHA also will need documentation from a health care provider on the accommodation requested and the disabled household member who requires the medically necessary modifications to the dwelling unit or non-housing program. You will be requested to complete a “Release of Information” form to allow DCHA to contact your health care provider to verify your needs.

Submit the completed request form, release form and medical documentation to the management office to begin the application process.

## **G. Who can verify my disability and need for an accommodation?**

- . • Your physician;
- . • A licensed health professional;
  
- . • Professional representing a social service agency; or
- . • A disability agency or clinic.

## **H. What happens to my request after I submit it to the property manager?**

The property manager forwards the request and all materials and verifications to the Director of Housing Management in the Regional Office.

The Director of Housing Management for your region will forward the request and all documentation to the Office of the ADA/504 Program. The decision to approve or deny the reasonable accommodation request shall be made as expeditiously as possible by the ADA/504 Coordinator.

**If you or a member of your household is disabled and require a reasonable accommodation, please contact your property management office or the Office of the ADA/504 Program at (202) 535-2737. TTY users call the DC relay service at 711 or (202) 855-1234. Voice users can call 202-855-1000.**

**Section VIII. Fair Hearings**

## **A. Resident Grievances (Quick Guide)**

The grievance procedures are contained in District of Columbia Municipal Regulations 14 (DCMR) Chapter

63. A copy of the regulations is available in each DCHA property Management Office. Copies are also available at the DCHA regional offices, and the central offices in the Office of Fair Hearings or the Client Placement Division. The grievance procedures apply to residents of DCHA properties (except Hope VI developments) and applicants to DCHA for public housing.

If a resident believes that DCHA has taken an action or failed to take an action that adversely affects his/her rights, duties, welfare or status, the resident should notify the housing manager or office involved. If you have tried unsuccessfully to resolve the issue directly with the housing manager or office involved, you may file a grievance with the DCHA Office of Fair Hearings, 1133 N. Capitol St., NE, or the management office of your property within one year of the action being grieved.

For assistance, call the DCHA Office of Fair Hearings at (202) 535-1245.