New Requirements for Smoke Detectors in Federally Assisted Units

As part of the Public and Federally Assisted Housing Fire Safety Act of 2022, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is requiring all public housing authorities to implement a new inspection requirement related to the type of smoke detectors allowed in federally assisted units.

Effective with inspections conducted December 29, 2024, all smoke detectors must either be:

- hard-wired to the unit; or
- have a 10-year non-rechargeable, non-replaceable primary battery and
    1. is sealed;
    2. is tamper resistant;
    3. contains a silencing means; and
    4. provides notification for persons with hearing loss

Failure to have the correct type of smoke detector, in working order, and in the appropriate locations in the unit, will be deemed a life-threatening deficiency and will require correction within 24-hours.

In addition, the following Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection requirements apply to smoke detectors:

- Smoke detectors should be installed high on walls or ceilings.
    - If mounted on the ceiling, then it must be greater than 4 inches from the wall.
    - If mounted on the wall, then the top edge of the smoke detector cannot be closer than 4 inches or greater than 12 inches from the ceiling.
- Smoke detectors should be installed at least 10 feet from a cooking appliance.
- Smoke detectors should not:
    - Be installed near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.
    - Be painted or have decorative stickers or other decorations present.
- The unit must include at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, in the following locations:
    - On each level of the unit;
    - Inside each bedroom;
    - Within 21 feet of any door to a bedroom measured along a path of travel; and
    - Where a smoke detector installed outside a bedroom is separated from an adjacent living area by a door, a smoke detector must also be installed on the living area side of the door.

We appreciate you paying close attention to this safety matter for your tenant(s).