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aid supplies and fire extinguishers shall be provided throughout the unit, smoke detectors shall be provided and emergency phone numbers (police, ambulance, fire department, etc.) shall be available at every phone and individual copies shall be provided to each occupant. All emergency and safety features and procedures shall meet applicable State and local standards.

(n) *Independent group residence.* In addition to the foregoing standards, the standards in 24 CFR 887.467 (a) through (g) apply to independent group residences.

[44 FR 70365, Dec. 6, 1979, as amended at 50 FR 9269, Mar. 7, 1985; 52 FR 1986, Jan. 15, 1987; 57 FR 33852, July 30, 1992; 58 FR 43722, Aug. 17, 1993; 63 FR 46580, Sept. 1, 1998; 64 FR 50227, Sept. 15, 1999]

§ 886.308 Maximum total annual contract commitment.

(a) *Number of units assisted.* Based on the final disposition program developed in accordance with 24 CFR part 290, HUD shall determine the number of units to be assisted up to 100 percent of the units in the project.

(b) *Maximum assistance.* The maximum total annual housing assistance payments that may be committed under the contract shall be the total of the gross rents for all the contract units in the project.

(c) *Changes in contract amounts.* In order to assure that housing assistance payments will be increased on a timely basis to cover increases in contract rents, changes in family composition, or decreases in family incomes:

(1) A project account shall be established and maintained, in an amount as determined by HUD consistent with section 8(c)(6) of the Act, out of amounts by which the maximum annual contract commitment per year exceeds amounts paid under the contract for any fiscal year. This account shall be established and maintained by HUD as a specifically identified and segregated account, and payment shall be made therefrom only for the purposes of:

(i) Housing assistance payments, and
(ii) Other costs specifically authorized or approved by HUD.

(2) Whenever a HUD-approved estimate of required housing assistance

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payments for a fiscal year exceeds the maximum annual contract commitment, causing the amount in the project account to be less than an amount equal to 40 percent of the maximum annual contract commitment, HUD, within a reasonable period of time, shall take such additional steps authorized by Section 8(c)(6) of the Act as may be necessary to carry out this assurance, including (as provided in that section of the Act) "the reservation of annual contributions authority for the purpose of amending housing assistance contracts or the allocation of a portion of new authorizations for the purpose of amending housing assistance contracts."

§ 886.309 Housing assistance payment to owners.

(a) *General.* Housing Assistance Payments shall be paid to Owners for units under lease by eligible Families, in accordance with the Contract and as provided in this section. These Housing Assistance Payments will cover the difference between the Contract Rent and the Tenant Rent. Where applicable, the Utility Reimbursement will be paid to the Family as an additional Housing Assistance Payment. The Contract will provide that the Owner will make this payment on behalf of HUD. Funds will be paid to the Owner in trust solely for the purpose of making this additional payment. If the Family and the utility company consent, the Owner may pay the Utility Reimbursement jointly to the Family and the utility company or directly to the utility company.

(b) *No assistance for owners.* No Section 8 assistance may be provided for any unit occupied by an owner. However, cooperatives are considered rental housing rather than owner-occupied housing under this subpart.

(c) *Payments for vacancies from execution of contract to initial occupancy.* If a Contract unit which is decent, safe and sanitary and has been accepted by HUD as available as of the effective date of the Contract is not leased within 15 days of the effective date of the Contract, the Owner will be entitled to housing assistance payments in the amount of 80 percent of the Contract Rent for the unit for a vacancy period

not exceeding 60 days from the effective date of the Contract provided that the Owner (1) has submitted a list of units leased as of the effective date and a list of the units not so leased; (2) 60 days prior to the completion of the rehabilitation or the date the agreement was executed, whichever is later, had notified the PHA of any units which the owner anticipated would be vacant on the anticipated effective date of the contract; (3) has taken and continues to take all feasible actions to fill the vacancy including, but not limited to: contracting applicants on the Owner's waiting list, if any, requesting the PHA and other appropriate sources to refer eligible applicants, and advertising the availability of the units in a manner specifically designed to reach low-income families; and (4) has not rejected any eligible applicant except for good cause acceptable to HUD.

(d) *Payments for vacancies after initial occupancy.* If an eligible family vacates its unit (other than as a result of action by the Owner which is in violation of the Lease or the Contract or any applicable law), the owner may receive housing assistance payments for so much of the month in which the Family vacates the unit as the unit remains vacant. Should the unit remain vacant, the Owner may receive from HUD a housing assistance payment in the amount of 80 percent of Contract Rent for a vacancy period not exceeding an additional month. However, if the owner collects any of the family's share of the rent for this period, the payment must be reduced to an amount which, when added to the family's payments, does not exceed 80 percent of the Contract Rent. Any such excess shall be reimbursed by the Owner to HUD or as HUD may direct. (See also §886.315.) The owner shall not be entitled to any payment under this paragraph unless he or she: (1) Immediately upon learning of the vacancy, has notified HUD of the vacancy or prospective vacancy and the reasons for the vacancy, and (2) has made and continues to make a good faith effort to fill the vacancy, including but not limited to, contacting applicants on the waiting list, if any, requesting the PHA and other appropriate sources to refer eligible applicants, and adver-

tising the availability of the unit, and (3) has not rejected any eligible applicant, except for good cause acceptable to HUD.

(e) *Payments for units where family is evicted.* If the owner evicts a family, the owner shall not be entitled to any payments pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section unless the request for such payment is supported by a certification that the provisions of §886.327 and part 247 of this title have been followed.

(f) *Prohibition for double compensation for vacancies.* The owner shall not be entitled to housing assistance payments with respect to vacant units under this section to the extent he or she is entitled to payments from other sources (for example, payments for losses of rental income incurred for holding units vacant for relocatees pursuant to Title I of the HCD Act or payments under §886.315).

(g) *Debt service payments.* (1) If a contract unit continues to be vacant after the 60-day period specified in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section, the Owner may submit a claim and receive additional housing assistance payments on a semiannual basis with respect to such a vacant unit in an amount equal to the principal and interest payments required to amortize the portion of the debt attributable to that unit for the period of the vacancy, whether such vacancy commenced during rent-up or after rent-up.

(2) Additional payments under this paragraph (g) for any unit shall not be for more than 12 months for any vacancy period, and shall be made only if:

(i) The unit is not in a project insured under the National Housing Act except pursuant to section 244 of that Act.

(ii) The unit was in decent, safe, and sanitary condition during the vacancy period for which payments are claimed.

(iii) The owner has taken and is continuing to take the actions specified in paragraphs (c)(1), (2) and (3) or paragraphs (d)(1) and (2) of this section, as appropriate.

(iv) The Owner has demonstrated in connection with the semiannual claim on a form and in accordance with the standards prescribed by HUD with respect to the period of the vacancy, that the project is not providing the Owner

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with revenues at least equal to the project costs incurred by the Owner, and that the amount of the payments requested is not in excess of that portion of the deficiency which is attributable to the vacant units for the period of the vacancies.

(v) The Owner has submitted, in connection with the semiannual claim, a statement with relevant supporting evidence that there is a reasonable prospect that the project can achieve financial soundness within a reasonable time. The statement shall indicate the causes of the deficiency; the corrective steps that have been and will be taken; and the time by which it is expected that the project revenues will at least equal project costs without the additional payments provided under this paragraph.

(3) HUD may deny any claim for additional payments or suspend or terminate payments if it determines that based on the Owner's statement and other evidence, there is not a reasonable prospect that the project can achieve financial soundness within a reasonable time.

[44 FR 70365, Dec. 6, 1979, as amended at 49 FR 19949, May 10, 1984; 53 FR 3369, Feb. 5, 1988; 58 FR 43722, Aug. 17, 1993]

§ 886.310 Initial contract rents.

HUD will establish contract rents at levels that, together with other resources available to the purchasers, provide sufficient amounts for the necessary costs of rehabilitating and operating the multifamily housing project and do not exceed 120 percent of the most recently published Section 8 Fair Market Rents for Existing Housing (24 CFR part 888, subpart A).

[60 FR 11859, Mar. 2, 1995]

§ 886.311 Term of contract.

The contract term for any unit shall not exceed 15 years, except that the term may be less than 15 years as provided under either paragraph (a) or (b) of this section.

(a) The contract term may be less than 15 years if HUD finds that, based on the rental charges and financing for the multifamily housing project to which the contract relates, the financial viability of the project can be

maintained under a contract having a term less than 15 years. Where a contract of less than 15 years is provided under this paragraph, the amount of rent payable by tenants of the project for units assisted under such a contract shall not exceed the amount payable for rent under section 3(a) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 for a period of at least 15 years.

(b) The contract term may be less than 15 years if the assistance is provided under a contract authorized under section 6 of the HUD Demonstration Act of 1993, and pursuant to a disposition plan under this part for a project that is determined by the HUD to be otherwise in compliance with this part.

[60 FR 11859, Mar. 2, 1995]

§ 886.311a Notice upon contract expiration.

(a) The Contract will provide that the owner will notify each assisted family, at least 90 days before the end of the Contract term, of any increase in the amount the family will be required to pay as rent which may occur as a result of its expiration. If the Contract is to be renewed but with a reduction in the number of units covered by it, this notice shall be given to each family who will no longer be assisted under the Contract.

(b) The notice provided for in paragraph (a) of this section shall be accomplished by: (1) Sending a letter by first class mail, properly stamped and addressed, to the family at its address at the project, with a proper return address, and (2) serving a copy of the notice on any adult person answering the door at the leased dwelling unit, or if no adult responds, by placing the notice under or through the door, if possible, or else by affixing the notice to the door. Service shall not be considered to be effective until both required notices have been accomplished. The date on which the notice shall be considered to be received by the family shall be the date on which the owner mails the first class letter provided for in this paragraph, or the date on which the notice provided for in this paragraph is properly given, whichever is later.