

# **BSC Habitability Policy**

## **I. Introduction**

The purpose of the BSC Habitability Policy is to create systems and procedures designed to ensure that each BSC unit meets reasonable habitability standards prior to the beginning of each contract term and that all units consistently maintain such standards throughout the contract period.

## **II. Responsibilities for Habitability**

1. As a cooperative housing organization, all stakeholders of the BSC must share responsibility for ensuring that habitability guidelines are met, as follows:
  - a. Central-level staff are responsible for developing and regularly updating habitability standards that comply with city and state ordinances related to housing, fire, and food service safety and for properly educating members and house-level managers on such standards. Additionally, staff will be responsible for ensuring that items units are unable or unwilling to correct are addressed in order to ensure the health and safety of BSC members, protect the sustainability of BSC assets, and ensure compliance with city/state ordinances and contractual agreements.
  - b. House-level managers are expected to regularly conduct self-inspections of their units to ensure that potential habitability issues are identified and promptly corrected. Additionally, house-level managers are expected to promptly respond to member concerns/complaints about habitability and inspection reports and coordinate with the house membership and central-level to ensure that all habitability issues are corrected.
  - c. Members are responsible for satisfactorily completing all workshift assigned to them, monitoring for and promptly reporting habitability problems, and working with fellow house members and managers to correct items they are able to address on their own.

## **III. Habitability Education**

1. All BSC members shall be educated on habitability standards and policies/procedures in conjunction with central and house-level New Member Orientations and at the beginning of each term, prior to the commencement of inspections.
2. All major house-level managers shall be educated on habitability standards and policies/procedures during manager training and will receive on-going education as needed throughout each term.

## **IV. Habitability Inspections**

1. Each term (Fall, Spring, and Summer) the Operations Assistant shall carry out up to three rounds of habitability inspections at all BSC units. These inspections shall include all common areas and the surrounding grounds of each unit. Each unit's assigned Senior Maintenance Crew member shall accompany the Operations Assistant on an inspection at least once per semester to advise on maintenance-related issues.
2. Habitability inspections shall be conducted on a randomized basis, without prior warning given to unit residents, in order to ensure that units are continuously habitable throughout the contract term. Additional inspections may also be conducted in response to complaints received from members, neighbors, outside entities, etc.
3. Habitability inspections shall be carried out in accordance with guidelines established by the Operations Assistant and Operations Manager at the beginning of each contract period. These guidelines shall be shared with all house-level managers and house members at the beginning of each term to ensure that all members are aware of the current standards, common habitability issues, examples of grades associated with various conditions, and violations that will lead to automatic failure during inspections.

## **V. Inspection Results and Follow-Up**

1. Following each inspection the Operations Assistant will issue a report within 3 business days of the inspection providing a habitability grade for each unit, outlining the corrections that must be made, and a providing a required timeline for completing those corrections. This report will be sent to all members of the unit and posted in common space. The report will also specify a date for re-inspection, if applicable.
2. All members of any unit receiving a failing grade on habitability inspections shall be fined the monetary equivalent of two workshift hours. Members with financial need may attempt to make up

this fine by completing paid workshift (following the regular paid workshift procedure). Workshift Managers shall be responsible for finding paid workshift opportunities for members with disabilities who wish to make up this fine, upon request.

3. Units shall be responsible for ensuring that required items are corrected within the timeframe provided in the habitability inspection report. Re-inspections shall be conducted to ensure that such items have been corrected.
4. Should a unit fail to correct the required items, the BSC shall hire on-call BSC workers and/or professional crews to correct the issues at the expense of the house. Such expenses shall come from the unit's Habitability Account

#### **VI. Habitability Incentive Program**

1. Each Fall and Spring semester the Operations Assistant shall select four units to receive the following habitability awards (based on inspection report grades/results). One of each type of award shall be given to a small house (with less than 45 members) and one of each type given to larger houses (with 45 or more members).
  - a. Most Improved
  - b. Best Overall
2. Each unit receiving a habitability award shall receive the monetary equivalent of two workshift hours, per member, deposited into their House Account, to use at the discretion of house council.

#### **VII. Interim Habitability Projects & Corrections**

1. The BSC shall perform habitability-related projects and corrections in between contract periods in order to ensure that each unit is restored to a baseline level of habitability at the beginning of each term in order to set high standards for incoming residents, prevent new residents from inheriting previous term's habitability deficiencies, and to prevent the gradual degradation of the units.
2. Based on the conditions observed during habitability inspections, the Operations Assistant shall develop recommendations for habitability-related projects that may be completed in between contract periods. Examples of such projects include, but shall not be limited to deep cleanings, capital improvement projects, landscaping projects, etc. that are not feasible or practical for units to complete themselves.
3. House-level managers, in conjunction with their unit councils, may also submit recommendations for projects prior to each interim contract period.
4. The Operations Manager shall review all recommendations and requests and approve a list of projects to be completed during each interim period and work with central-level staff and house-level managers to complete said projects.
5. Funding for interim projects shall come from units Habitability Accounts, with any excess coming from House Accounts, or other house-level accounts as appropriate, (e.g. Decentralized Maintenance, HAPs, Furniture, etc.).