

Important Inspection Guidelines for Electrical Outlets.

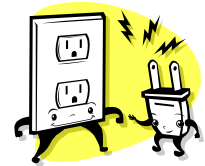
The Oakland Housing Authority is clarifying for owners and inspectors the criteria for evaluating the proper operating condition of electrical outlets using HUD's Housing Quality Standards.

Do I have to upgrade my electrical system?

- **No.**

Under Housing Quality Standards an owner does not have to upgrade the electrical system or convert two pronged outlets to three-pronged outlets. However, Owners must ensure that:

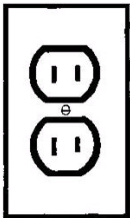
- Two pronged outlets are in proper working condition.
- Three pronged outlets are grounded or protected by GFCI



What are the basic types of outlets?

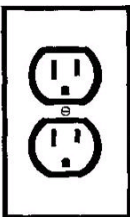
There are two basic types of outlets: two pronged and three pronged outlets.

Two pronged outlets



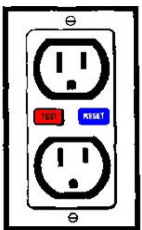
- A two pronged outlet is ungrounded and has a two-wire electrical system this includes only a hot and neutral wire.
- Original two pronged ungrounded outlets are acceptable under HQS as long as they are in proper operating condition, free of hazards.
- For two pronged ungrounded outlets the inspector will verify that the outlet is free from electrical hazard, and is in proper operating condition by simply plugging in an appliance.

Three pronged outlets



- A three pronged outlet has a three wire electrical system that includes a hot, neutral, and an additional hole for a ground wire.
- **“Upgraded” outlets**, (those changed from two pronged to three pronged outlets) are acceptable as long as the outlet is functioning as designed and in the proper operating condition. (Must be grounded or be protected by GFCI).
- In order for the inspector to test these outlets they will use an outlet tester that they plug in and note a pattern of lights that indicate if the outlet is working properly. If not, the inspector will look to verify that the outlet is protected by a **GFCI**.

What is a GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter)?



- A GFCI senses a difference in current flow between the hot and the neutral terminals, it shuts off the flow of current to the outlet.
- A cost-effective method to upgrade from two pronged to three pronged outlet without requiring installation of a new ground wire which may require a licensed electrician to put a new wire into the circuit breaker box and may be expensive
- For GFCI outlets, the inspector will “trip” the outlet by pressing the test button. If the GFCI is installed at the circuit breaker box, the inspector will “trip” the GFCI there and verify that the power shuts off to any ungrounded outlet.

Should you have any questions feel free to contact us at 510-874-1560 or email us at ownerservices@oakha.org
For a copy of the notice issued by HUD visit their website at www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/10/pih2010-10.pdf.