



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Deval L. Patrick, Governor ♦ Timothy P. Murray, Lt. Governor ♦ Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary

Public Housing Notice 2012-12

Memorandum

To: All Local Housing Authority Executive Directors
From: Lizbeth Heyer, Associate Director, Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance
Subject: Common Area Use Policy
Date: October 3, 2012

In response to recent circumstances related to use of common areas in state aided public housing developments, the Department of Housing and Community Development is issuing this PH Notice to provide residents and administrators with general guidance on the matter.

As a general rule, tenants cannot place personal property on or in common areas of housing authority property. They may display decorations, plants, signs and other items within the areas that are under their exclusive control, in a manner that does not obstruct an open egress route from the dwelling unit to the outside public way, and that does not pose any other safety hazard.

Should the Local Housing Authority determine that it would allow displays in common areas where egress is not at issue, residents may be allowed to display selected items in accordance with Local Housing Authority rules and policy and in compliance with local ordinances or by-laws.

The single exception is that residents may always display the American flag in common spaces, as long as it complies with safety provisions mentioned above, and is displayed respectfully in accordance with existing laws related to use of the flag.

The Local Housing Authority will promulgate the guidance for the use of common space, and will seek cooperation of the resident population in regard to enforcement.