

THE BUILDING OF A NEW INSPECTION MODEL FOR THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (SECTION 8)

HUD's National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) will replace Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8). The inspection protocol is being rolled out nation-wide and mandated by Congress. The new NSPIRE model prioritizes health, safety, and functional defects over appearance. The new inspection standards include over 300 potential health and safety defects: with several dozen of them being the 24-hour repair type. When deficiencies are not corrected within established timeframes, the Public Housing Authority (PHA) will be required to suspend, abate, or terminate HAP to the landlord.

Beginning October 1, 2024, the Southeastern Minnesota Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority will begin moving to the new inspection (NSPIRE) protocol for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8). This is a resource to update our clients, landlords, and other service providers on the upcoming inspection changes.

The NSPIRE Categories of Deficiencies:

Each category will ideally require certain timeframes for repair; with several of the "Severe" also being "Life Threatening".

- Low – **Pass:** No repairs required
- Moderate – **Fail:** Repairs completed in 30 days
- Severe – **Fail:** Repairs completed in 30 days
- Life Threatening – **Fail:** Repairs completed in 24 hours (See attached Life Threatening Defects)




The Inspectable areas:

- Single Family/Duplex/Row House
 - Driveway/Parking
 - Grounds/Yard
 - Building Exterior
 - Unit
- Multi-Story Building (mid/highrise unit)
 - Parking Lot
 - Common Use Exterior Areas (smoking area, patios, walkways,etc.)
 - Building Exterior





- Common Use Interior Areas (lobby, hallway to unit, elevators, community room, laundry facility, etc.)

[National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate \(NSPIRE\) | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](https://www.hud.gov/nspire)

Values and Goals

 People Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure families are living in safe and tenantable homes ✓ Year-long maintenance with a unit-focused approach ✓ Prioritize residents over properties ✓ Introducing resident surveys for better quality service
 Properties Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Better identification of substandard housing through clear, defined inspection protocols ✓ Increased inspection consistency ✓ Modernization of health and safety standards ✓ Ensure homes are safe and suitable for residential use
 Programs Modernize HUD's Inspection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Modernization of HUD's Physical Inspection Process ✓ Improve service delivery for our residents and housing principles ✓ Alignment of multiple inspection standards into a clear, defined inspection protocol ✓ Safe and habitable homes

National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate

 Residents	 POA/PHA	 Inspectors	 HUD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Year-long maintenance with a unit-focused approach ✓ Prioritization of residents over properties ✓ Introducing resident surveys for better quality service ✓ Safe and Habitable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increased inspection consistency ✓ Collaborate with HUD ✓ Ability to contribute input to new standard ✓ Access to inspection data ✓ Reliable data and presentable reports that help portfolio management and risk assessment ✓ Safe and Habitable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Electronic based inspections ✓ Increased inspection accuracy ✓ Clear, defined inspection protocol ✓ Ability to capture pictures ✓ Collaborate with HUD ✓ Safe and Habitable homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access to reliable, valid, and objective data ✓ Alignment of multiple inspection standards ✓ Adaptation to industry change and modernization of health and safety standards ✓ Better performance assessments for HUD-assisted housing ✓ Safe and Habitable homes

NSPIRE-V Life Threatening Defects:

Call-for-aid System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System is blocked, OR• Pull cord end is higher than 6 inches off the floor.
Call-for-aid System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A call-for-aid system does not emit sound, light, or send a signal to the annunciator, OR• The annunciator does not indicate the correct corresponding room, OR• Pull cord is missing, OR• Pull cord is tied up such that it cannot be engaged.
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon monoxide alarm is missing, not installed, or not install in affirmative habitability requirement a proper location.
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon monoxide alarm is obstructed.
Chimney	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A visually accessible (i.e., can be reasonably accessed and observed) chimney, flue, or firebox connected to a fireplace or wood-burning appliance is incomplete (i.e., evidence of a previously installed component that is now not present) such that it may not safely contain fire and convey smoke and combustion gases to the exterior, OR• A visually accessible (i.e., can be reasonably accessed and observed) chimney, flue, or firebox connected to a fireplace or wood-burning appliance is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality) such that it may not safely contain fire and convey smoke and combustion gases to the exterior.
Chimney	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The chimney exhibits signs of structural failure such that the integrity of the chimney is jeopardized.
Door – Fire Labeled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire labeled door is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but is now not present or is incomplete).
Egress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The exit access or exit is obstructed.

Egress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exit discharge is obstructed.
Egress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping room is located on the third floor or below and has an obstructed rescue opening.
Egress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire escape access is obstructed.
Electrical – Conductor, Outlet, and Switch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlet or switch is damaged. Any portion of a visually accessible (i.e., can be reasonably accessed and observed) outlet or switch is damaged (visibly defective; impacts functionality) such that it may not safely carry or control electrical current at the outlet or switch.
Electrical – Conductor, Outlet, and Switch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical conductor is not enclosed or properly insulated (i.e., damaged or missing sheathing that exposes the insulated wiring or conductor, open port, missing knockout, missing outlet or switch cover or missing breaker or fuse), OR An opening or gap is present and measures greater than ½ inch.
Electrical – Conductor, Outlet and Switch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is currently in contact with an electrical conductor.
Electrical Service Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overcurrent protection device (i.e., fuse or breaker) is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality) such that it may not interrupt the circuit during an overcurrent condition.
Exit Sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit sign is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR Exit sign is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but is now not present or is incomplete), OR Exit sign is obstructed such that the word “EXIT” is not clearly visible, OR Exit sign is not adequately illuminated.
Fire Escape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any stair, ladder, platform, guardrail, or handrail is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR Any stair, ladder, platform, guardrail, or handrail is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete).

Fire Extinguisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure gauge indicates that the fire extinguisher is over or under-charged.
Fire Extinguisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date on the service tag of any fire extinguisher has exceeded one year, OR • The fire extinguisher tag is missing or illegible, OR • A nonchargeable or disposable fire extinguisher is ore than 12 years old (based on manufacture date).
Fire Extinguisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire extinguisher is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR • Fire extinguisher is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete).
Flammable and Combustible Ite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flammable or combustible item is on or within 3 feet of an appliance that provides heat for thermal comfort or a fuel-burning water heater, OR • Improperly stored chemicals
Guardrail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guardrail is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but is not present or is incomplete) or not installed (i.e., never installed, but should have been) along a walking surface that is more than 30 inches above the floor or grade below
Guardrail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guardrail is missing functional component(s) (i.e., a component that is critical to the guardrail protecting from fall hazards), OR • Guardrail is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR • Guardrail is less than 30 inches in height, OR • Guardrail is not securely attached and cannot reasonably protect from fall hazards.
HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspection date is on or between October 1 and March 31, AND • The permanently installed heating source is not working, OR • The permanently installed heating source is working and the interior temperature is below 64 degrees Fahrenheit.

HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvented space heater that burns gas, oil, or kerosene is present.
HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combustion chamber cover or gas shutoff valve is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but is now not present or is incomplete) from a fuel burning heating appliance.
HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel burning heating system or device is present, AND Exhaust vent is misaligned, blocked, disconnected, or improperly connected through to the ceiling or wall, OR Exhaust vent is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR Exhaust vent is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete).
Leak – Gas or Oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence of a gas, propane, or oil leak, OR There is an uncapped gas or fuel supply line.
Mold – like Substance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative area of patches is more than 9 square foot in a room.
Smoke Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke alarm is not installed inside each bedroom, AND Smoke alarm is not installed outside the bedroom(s), AND Smoke alarm is not installed on each level.
Smoke Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke alarm is not installed inside each classroom, AND Smoke alarm is not installed outside the classroom(s), AND Smoke alarm is not installed on each level
Smoke Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke alarm is obstructed.
Smoke Alarm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.
Sprinkler Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sprinkler head assembly is encased or obstructed by an item or object that is within 18 inches of the sprinkler head.
Sprinkler Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sprinkler assembly component is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), inoperable (i.e., overall system or component

	thereof not meeting function or purpose; with or without visible damage), or missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete) and it is detrimental to performance.
Sprinkler Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkler assembly has evidence of corrosion.
Sprinkler Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign material covers 75% or more of the sprinkler assembly, OR • Foreign material covers 75% or more of the glass bulb.
Structural System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural system exhibits signs of serious failure and may threaten the resident's safety.
Toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 1 toilet was installed, and it is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete)
Water Heater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chimney or flue piping is blocked, misaligned, or missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but now not present or is incomplete).
Water Heater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas shutoff valve is damaged (i.e., visibly defective; impacts functionality), OR • Gas shutoff valve is missing (i.e., evidence of prior installation, but is now not present or is incomplete), OR • Gas shutoff valve is not installed (i.e., never installed, but should have been)