

Chapter 7

Unit Inspections

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has mandated that Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) adopt the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) as the new approach to defining and assessing housing quality. The purpose of NSPIRE is to strengthen HUD's physical condition standards and improve HUD oversight through the alignment and consolidation of the inspection regulations used to evaluate "HUD housing," across multiple programs including AHFC-Owned Housing, Project Based Vouchers, Sponsor Based Rental Assistance, Housing Choice Vouchers, Section 8 Multifamily, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation.

HUD Regulation – 24 CFR 5.701

- (a) **Scope.** This subpart applies the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate standards to the following HUD programs:
- (1) All Public Housing programs (programs for housing assisted under the U.S. housing Act of 1937 other than section 8 of the Act);
 - (2) The Housing Choice Voucher program under section 8(o) of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, [part 982 of this title](#) and the Project-Based Voucher program under section 8(o)(13) of the Act and the regulations at [24 CFR part 983](#) (referred to in this part as the HCV and PBV programs, or HCV and PBV housing);
 - (3) All project-based Section 8 programs
- (b) **Conflicts.** The regulations in this subpart may be supplemented by the specific regulations for the HUD-assisted programs listed in [paragraph \(a\)](#) of this section. The program-specific regulations may address the frequency of inspections, who performs the inspections and whether alternative inspections are available given the statutory and regulatory framework for the program. When there is a conflict between the regulations of this subpart and the program-specific regulations, the program-specific regulations govern.
- (c) **HUD housing.** For purposes of this subpart, the term "HUD housing" means the types of housing listed in [paragraph \(a\)](#) of this section.

AHFC will conduct inspections for all programs utilizing the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NPSIRE).

Refer to the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate standards handbook” to find the requirements and explicit directions to conduct inspection.

The inspector's primary role is to ensure that NSPIRE requirements are being met. The inspector must thoroughly inspect all aspects of the property (unit, inside and exterior), while documenting deficiencies and conditions.

1. Inspectable Areas

NSPIRE Inspections are organized into three “Areas”; Inside, Outside, and Unit. The “Outside” areas include components on the grounds, parking areas, exterior amenities, and structural components such as walls, foundations, and roofing. The “Inside” area includes common interior locations such as hallways, stairs, offices, and community rooms, as well as centralized building mechanical such as HVAC, domestic hot water, and fire safety. “Unit” housing refers to the interior components of an individual unit.

2. NSPIRE Ratings

Each inspection standard and deficiency in NSPIRE includes a “Rating,” which determines two factors; possible impact on safety, and whether or not the issue creates a Life-threatening condition. Additionally, the ratings are used to determine the amount of time repairs are “due.” The ratings used in this standard are as follows:

2.A Life Threatening

The Life-Threatening category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the unit or on the property, present a high risk of death to a resident.

2.B Severe

The Severe category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the unit or on the property, present a high risk of permanent disability, or serious injury or illness, to a resident; or the physical security or safety of a resident or their property would be seriously compromised.

2.C Moderate

The Moderate Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the unit or on the property, present a moderate risk of an adverse medical event requiring a healthcare visit; cause temporary harm; or if left untreated, cause or worsen a chronic condition that may have long-lasting adverse health effects; or that the physical security or safety of a resident or their property could be compromised.

2.D Low

Deficiencies critical to habitability but not presenting a substantive health or safety risk to residents.

3. Required Inspections

3.A Move-In Inspection

A Move-In inspection is required prior to the start of assistance to ensure the unit is in compliance with NSPIRE Standards. For AHFC Owned Housing programs, the tenant cannot take possession of the unit until deficiencies are corrected. AHFC Owned Housing includes S8N Multifamily, Unassisted, and the Low Rent portfolio of properties.

3.B Housekeeping Inspection (AHFC Owned Housing Programs)

AHFC Owned Housing includes S8N Multifamily, Unassisted, and the Low Rent portfolio of properties. AHFC will conduct a housekeeping inspection three months after move in. The purpose of the inspection is to determine needed repairs and verify that the unit remains decent, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.

AHFC reserves the right to conduct six-month housekeeping inspection at its discretion.

3.C Special Inspections

A special inspection may be requested by the family or a third party as a result of problems identified with a unit between regularly scheduled inspections. These inspections will be scheduled when the alleged violations constitute a serious habitability impediment to the unit or where the violation constitutes a serious threat to the value and integrity of the property.

3.D Regular Inspections

AHFC is required to perform an inspection in each unit, interior and exterior on a regular basis.

3.D.1. AHFC Owned Housing Regular Inspections

AHFC Owned Housing includes S8N Multifamily, Unassisted, and the Low Rent portfolio of properties. AHFC will perform inspections on an annual basis. Families who repeatedly fail the inspections or cause excessive damage to the unit may be in violation of the lease and subject to housekeeping inspections.

3.E Move-Out Inspection (AHFC Owned Housing Programs)

AHFC Owned Housing includes S8N Multifamily, Unassisted, and the Low Rent portfolio of properties. AHFC will perform a move-out inspection when the family vacates the unit. The purpose of this inspection is to determine whether there are damages that exceed normal wear and tear. Any claim for damages will be based upon the comparison between the move-in and the move-out inspections.

3.F Quality Assurance and Other Inspections

AHFC may conduct Quality Assurance (QA) inspections to determine the condition of the unit and to ensure AHFC staff are properly documenting the condition of a unit.

Periodically, families may also be inspected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, insurance agencies, state agencies, and other AHFC departments. AHFC will attempt to give as much notice as possible, however, units are typically selected at random on the day of the inspection.

4. Inspection Notice

AHFC will provide a written notice to a tenant, except in an emergency, random QA selection or for move-ins, with an inspection's scheduled date and time.

- AHFC will complete the *Notice of Entry* form when the tenant is not present to notify the tenant that AHFC has entered the unit.
- Except in an emergency situation, AHFC will not enter the unit if only minor children are present in the unit.

5. Elevated Blood Levels (Voucher Programs)

AHFC Central Office staff will obtain annually from local health agencies the names and addresses of children with identified Elevated Blood Levels (EBL) and must annually match this information with the names and addresses of families who are assisted in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

If a match occurs, AHFC must determine whether local health officials have tested the unit for lead-based paint. If the unit has lead-based paint, AHFC must require the landlord to treat the lead-based paint. If the landlord does not complete the corrective actions required by this section, the family must be issued a voucher to move.

AHFC must keep a copy of each inspection report for at least three years. If a dwelling unit requires testing, or if the dwelling unit requires treatment of chewable surfaces based on the testing, AHFC must keep the test results indefinitely and, if applicable, the landlord certification of treatment. The records must indicate which chewable surfaces in the dwelling units have been tested and which chewable surfaces in the units have been treated. If records establish that certain chewable surfaces were tested or tested and treated in accordance with NSPIRE, such chewable surfaces do not have to be tested or treated at any subsequent time.