

HUD Transitions from Housing Quality Standards to NSPIRE Standards

Federal regulations require smoke detectors to be tamper-free by December 31, 2024. These detectors should be a seal and tamper proof 10-year detector or hardwired.

HUD has changed the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) inspection protocol effective date to October 1, 2025, for all rental units assisted with voucher funding. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has made this transition to prioritize health, safety, and function over appearance.

Below is a list of the major changes in the standards.

- Establishes three inspectable areas:
 - UNIT: The interior components of an individual unit.
 - INSIDE: Refers to the common areas such as hallways, offices, community rooms and building systems that are not inside a unit like boilers, hot water heater and fire safety systems.
 - OUTSIDE: Refers to the grounds, parking areas, foundations, roofing and other structural components.
- Addressing life-threatening and severe deficiencies within 24 hours.
- Making the Smoke Alarm and CO Detectors Standard consistent with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 72 – National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code.
- Specifying Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protection as a requirement.
- Setting minimum temperature requirements during the colder months and requiring a permanent heating source.
- Developing deficiencies based on observed mold conditions or elevated moisture levels.
- Including criteria for when guardrails and handrails are required.
- Creating a Fire Door Standard detailing the specific function, operability, and structural integrity requirements for fire doors.
- Establishing infestation deficiencies based on discrete levels of observations with clarification on which pests are included in this standard.

For a detailed description on each NSPIRE standards, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2jx9tb3t>.

NSPIRE standards will change the timeframe to correct failed inspection items on several criteria. There is also new criteria that will be classified as a failed inspection item. Below is a chart of the failed items which will change from a regular correction time frame to a 24-hour correction.

ITEMS WHICH REQUIRE A 24-HOUR CORRECTION

Fire and Life Safety Equipment:
Carbon monoxide alarms not installed in all required locations (ceiling of common area mechanical room with fuel burning system or bedroom that contains fuel burning system or in unit that is one story or less above/ below unventilated garage)
Smoke alarm is not installed where required (inside each sleeping area, outside each sleeping area, and on each level)
Fire extinguisher pressure gauge reads over or under charged OR fire extinguisher service tag is missing, illegible, or expired OR fire extinguisher is damaged or missing
Sprinkler head assembly is obstructed by an item, object, or encasement within 18 inches of head OR paint or foreign material on sprinkler head assembly OR sprinkler head escutcheon is missing (ring around assembly) OR concealed sprinkler cover plate assembly is missing
Exit sign is damaged, missing, damaged, obstructed, or not adequately illuminated
Fire escape component is damaged or missing (stair, ladder, platform, guardrail, or handrail)
Call for aid is missing, blocked, cord higher than 6 inches from floor
Electrical:
Electrical outlet or switch is damaged
Fuse or breaker is damaged
Electrical conductor is not enclosed or properly insulated (damage sheathing, open port, missing knockout, missing outlet or switch cover, missing breaker or fuse, missing lightbulb) OR an opening or gap is present and measures greater than 1/4 inch.
Heating Systems:
Permanently installed heating source damaged, inoperable, missing or not installed and outside temperature is below 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
Hot Water heater discharge line is to terminate between 2 to 6 inches from waste receptor flood-level (floor)
Improperly stored flammable or combustible item on or near an ignition source
Egress:
Obstructed egress (must be a minimum of 2 unobstructed means of egress to public way and 1 primary means from unit or inside of the building to the exit access)
Guardrail missing or not installed on walking surface which is more than 30 inches above floor or grade below OR guardrail not functionally adequate (missing a functional component or damaged or less than 30 inches in height or not securely attached and cannot reasonably protect from fall hazards)
Miscellaneous:
Clothes Dryer transition duct detached or missing, OR exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow, OR transition duct is constructed of unsuitable material

NEW OR UPDATED FAILED INSPECTION ITEMS

Sidewalk, walkway, or ramp is blocked or impassable, includes overgrown vegetation. Private Roads and Driveways: Road or driveway access to property is blocked or impassable for vehicles
Infestations of roaches, bed bugs, rodents to include but not limited to birds, wasps, squirrels and voles in an interior area
Mold-like substance including mildew: *Patches of mold-like substance less than 1 sq feet will pass; **Cumulative area of patches less than 1 sq foot and greater than 9 sq feet in a room is a 30 day correction; ***Cumulative area of patches less than 9 sq feet in a room in the UNIT is a 24 hour correction