

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER, CT.

COMMISSIONERS

Josh Howroyd-Chairman Paul Rubin-Vice Chairman Lisa O'Neill Eileen Remillard Timothy H. Becker

NSPIRE STANDARDS TO REPLACE HQS FOR HCV INSPECTIONS



Dear Participating Owner / Property Manager,

As part of its ongoing commitment to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced new inspection guidelines: NSPIRE, or National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate.

All owners/managers that receive Housing Assistance Payments under the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) will need to ensure dwelling units comply with the new standards. With NSPIRE, standards relating to fire safety will change due to a number of fire-related incidents across the nation, and the availability of improved technology in fire warning systems.

Inspections are a critical tool for helping HUD and landlords ensure that they provide safe and sanitary housing for assisted housing tenants. In the [final rule](#) published in May 2023, the National Standards for the Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) rule replaces Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and updates HUD's inspections process by implementing inspections that better reflect the true physical condition of the property.

The final rule streamlines standards and creates a unified assessment between the HUD Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), and Multifamily Housing Programs. HCV landlords can expect the new model to address some of their previous concerns by increasing inspection consistency through an objective set of standards and prioritizing health, safety, and functional defects over appearance.

The [final standards](#), which accompany the final rule, were published in the Federal Registrar on June 22, 2023. [PIH Notice 2023-28](#), published in September, includes additional guidance. Public housing agencies (PHAs) are required to adopt the new NSPIRE inspections methodology no later than October 1, 2024, for their HCV Programs. Some of the new standards that are different from HQS that landlords can expect to see include:

- ☒ **Smoke alarms:** Smoke alarms are required on each level of the home and inside each sleeping area.
- ☒ **Carbon Monoxide alarms:** Carbon monoxide alarms are required inside units and in unit inside areas such as hallways that contain a fuel-burning appliance or fireplace.



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- ☑ **Cosmetic deficiencies:** Cosmetic deficiencies to a unit or its exterior are no longer considered a deficiency.
- ☑ **List of life-threatening deficiencies:** A list of deficiencies that are considered life threatening must be adopted by all PHAs. (The full list is available in the Federal Register in [85 FR 5458](#).)
- ☑ **Setting minimum temperature requirements:** If the inspection is on or between October 1 and March 31, and the permanently installed heating source is not working, or it is working but the interior temperature is below 65 degrees, that is considered a life-threatening deficiency. If the interior temperature is between 64 and 67.9 degrees, it is considered a non-life-threatening deficiency.

As of December 29, 2024, all smoke detectors which are solely battery-operated will have to have sealed, tamper-proof batteries. It will not be an NSPIRE deficiency until that time.

During the inspection, the Section 8 housing inspector will physically test each and every smoke alarm in the unit to ensure the device works as intended. Access to each smoke alarm will be needed. If any device does not work properly, it will be cited as inoperable.

Finally, the NSPIRE standards specify that an inoperable, missing, or improperly installed smoke detector is a life-threatening issue requiring a 24-hour repair, correction, or act of abatement.

In addition to these changes, the new rules also require HUD to review the standards every 3 years. During the review period, the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the standards.

Landlords can find the full list of NSPIRE Standards https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/6092-N-05nspire_final_standards.pdf, and a simplified checklist https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/NSPIRE_Fillable_Checklist.pdf. Additional materials, including training videos and webinars, will become available in the near future. To receive the latest information about NSPIRE, https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USHUDPIH/subscriber/new?topic_id=NSPIRE_NEWS, the news and announcements mailing list.



If you have any questions, please reach out to your Housing Choice Voucher Program Specialist for assistance. The MHA is striving to keep our landlords updated with all new protocols from HUD.

Thank you for your participation in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Joseph D'Ascoli

Joseph D'Ascoli
Executive Director