



# National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE)

## Lead Exposure and Prevention Advisory Committee (LEPAC) Meeting

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# Sunset of HQS and UPCS

**Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) and Housing Quality Standards (HQS) have been the standards by which HUD measured the physical condition of properties for over 20 years**





# Final Rule & Standards



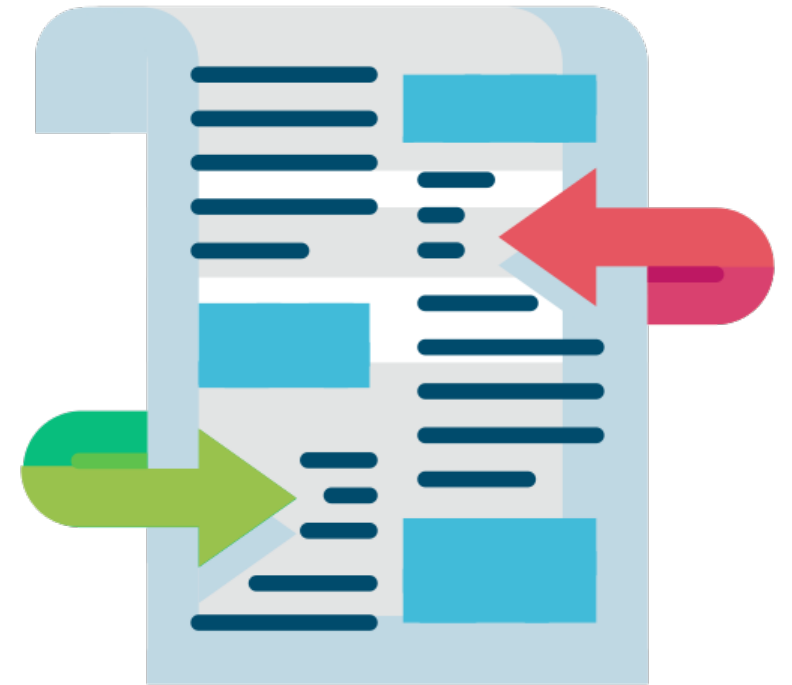
**HUD published a proposed rule in January 2021 and proposed NSPIRE standards for comment in June 2022. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, HUD published the final NSPIRE rule that introduced changes to all of HUD's rental assistance programs. The rule:**

- Requires the same health and safety standards for all HUD assisted rental housing, including privately owned properties where HUD-assisted residents reside (e.g., vouchers)
- Specifies the manner and timeframe for the remediation of health and safety deficiencies for three categories of health and safety defects with specific remediation timelines, and align HOTMA Life-Threatening
- Requires an annual self-inspection and reporting requirement for public and Multifamily housing program properties
- Outlines the NSPIRE framework including standards and administrative processes such as appeals and enforcement for REAC-performed inspections
- Revises the approach to scoring of REAC-performed inspections to emphasize resident health

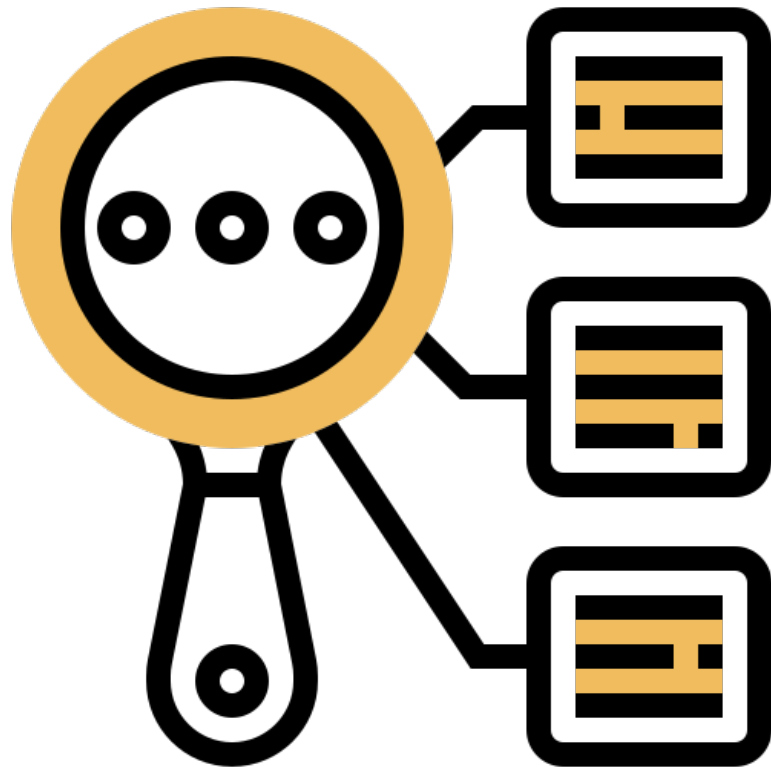
# New Items in the Final Rule

**The final rule establishes a new approach to defining and assessing housing quality: The National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE). This rule is part of a broad revision of the way HUD-assisted housing is inspected and evaluated. New items include:**

- Inspection standards review process at least every 3 years
- Habitability and safety “affirmatives” in regulation (e.g., space, GFCI outlets, lighting, HVAC, water safety)
- Removed site and neighborhood requirements for HCV
- New nomenclature for health and safety deficiencies: Life-threatening, Severe, Moderate and Low
- Life-threatening and Severe deficiencies correction requirements
- Self-inspections for Public and Multifamily Housing programs: all units, annually and collected if score <60
- Administrative enforcement referrals to HUD’s Dept. Enforcement Center (DEC) for scores 30 and below, or two successive scores <60



# Standards Notice



The Standards Notice details inspectable items at HUD-assisted and Multifamily-insured properties. This includes a classification of which conditions are considered Life-threatening, Severe, Moderate, or Low risk by item and inspectable area. HUD will subsequently update these Standards through future Federal Register notices at least once every 3 years with an opportunity for public comment.

- Published on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023
- Full Standards Notice found on the [Federal Register](#)
- Federal Register includes the list of Life-Threatening conditions for the voucher program under HOTMA





# Changes in Final Standards Notice



**The final standards were published with changes considering feedback HUD received and additional testing in the field during the NSPIRE Demonstration. Major changes include:**

- Addressing life-threatening and severe deficiencies within 24 hours and moderate deficiencies within 30 days
- Making the Smoke Alarm Standard consistent with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 72
- Creating a Fire Door Standard detailing the specific function, operability and structural integrity requirements for fire doors
- Requiring carbon monoxide alarms to be installed in compliance with the 2018 International Fire Code
- Setting minimum temperature requirements during the colder months and a permanent heating source
- Including criteria for when guardrails and handrails are required

- Establishing infestation deficiencies based on discrete levels of observations with clarification on citable pests
- Developing deficiencies based on observed mold conditions or elevated moisture levels measured using a moisture meter
- Including a deficiency for an enhanced visual assessment for deteriorated paint in units where children under 6 years of age reside to document potential lead-based paint hazards
- Including affirmative habitability requirements for bathrooms, kitchens, and other rooms utilized by residents (e.g. safe drinking water in kitchen and bathroom, space for food preparation and storage)

# H&S Determinations



## Life Threatening



Deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a high risk of death or severe illness or injury to a resident.

## Severe



Deficiencies that, if evident in the home 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.

## Moderate



Deficiencies that, if evident in home or on 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.

## Low



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

# Core Health & Safety Focus

The eight focus areas are critical to the habitability and safety of residents





# Addressing Water Safety

## The NSPIRE Final Rule references water safety

HUD recognizes the EPA is the government agency tasked with testing and measuring water quality

HUD will not inspect for water quality but will have visual inspection of lead service lines and an assessment via an information request if an outage or alert has occurred (for data collection purposes only)

HUD only requires PHAs to be aware of local drinking water alerts as per EPA regulations and implement acceptable criteria variations like point-of-use water filtration when needed



# Addressing Lead-Based Paint

## NSPIRE will has a different approach than UPCS

- Add a lead-based paint visual assessment standard
  - Incorporates requirements from HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule regulations for the voucher program
  - In buildings constructed before 1978, inspector will perform a visual assessment for deteriorated paint in all units and common areas where children could visit
  - NSPIRE enhances, but does not replace HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule requirements





# NSPIRE Standards Webpage



**You can find the standards on the NSPIRE Standards web page:**

**This web page provides:**

- Ability to view the standards and download:
  - Single standards
  - All standards in a zip file
- Guidance for navigating the standards

## Final Standards

STANDARDS	Last Updated	Inspectable area(s) standard applies to:		
		Unit	Inside	Outside
<a href="#">Address and Signage Standard</a>	06-20-2023			Y
<a href="#">Bathtub and Shower Standard</a>	06-20-2023	Y	Y	
<a href="#">Cabinet and Storage Standard</a>	06-20-2023	Y	Y	
<a href="#">Call-for-Aid System Standard</a>	06-20-2023	Y	Y	
<a href="#">Carbon Monoxide Alarm Standard</a>	06-20-2023	Y	Y	
<a href="#">Ceiling Standard</a>	06-20-2023	Y	Y	

# Scoring Notice

The NSPIRE Scoring Notice outlines how HUD will sample and score Public and Multifamily housing properties for an inspection. The Scoring Notice is a critical step in HUD's mission to improve conditions in HUD assisted housing by aligning and consolidating inspection regulations used to evaluate HUD housing across multiple programs.

- Like the final Standards Notice, the scoring methodology will also be updated once every 3 years with an opportunity for public comment
- Published on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- Full Scoring Notice found on the [Federal Register](#)





Deficiencies are scored based on two factors: severity and location



Deficiencies are weighed using a Defect Severity Value where the weight of the deduction for a given deficiency changes depending on both the location and the severity of the deficiency



New requirements in the rule will not be scored in the first 12 months of NSPIRE implementation



PHAs can expect to receive their full scored inspection report within 15 days and have 45 days to submit a request for a technical review for issues or errors



# Defect Examples



	Outside	Inside	Unit
<b>Life-Threatening</b>	Gas dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.	Structural system exhibits signs of serious failure.	Flammable or combustible material is on or near an ignition source.
<b>Severe</b>	A sharp edge that can result in a cut or puncture hazard is present.	Fire labeled door does not close and latch or self-close and latch.	Call-for-aid system is blocked.
<b>Moderate</b>	Trip hazard on walking surface.	Plumbing leak that allows for water intrusion in unintended areas.	Refrigerator component is damaged such that it impacts functionality.
<b>Low</b>	Water runoff is unable to flow through the site drainage system.	Auxiliary lighting component is damaged or missing.	Presence of mold-like substance at very low levels is observed visually.



# NSPIRE Defect Impact Weights



- The **Defect Impact Weights** table shown below is the backbone of the scoring model

	<b>Outside</b>	<b>Inside</b>	<b>Unit</b>
<b>Life-Threatening</b>	49.6	54.5	60
<b>Severe</b>	12.2	13.4	14.8
<b>Moderate</b>	4.5	5	5.5
<b>Low</b>	2	2.2	2.4

# Administrative Notice

HUD published the NSPIRE Administrative notice on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, which covers the process and operational requirements for Public housing and Multifamily Housing assisted properties covered by the final rule. The Administrative notice includes:

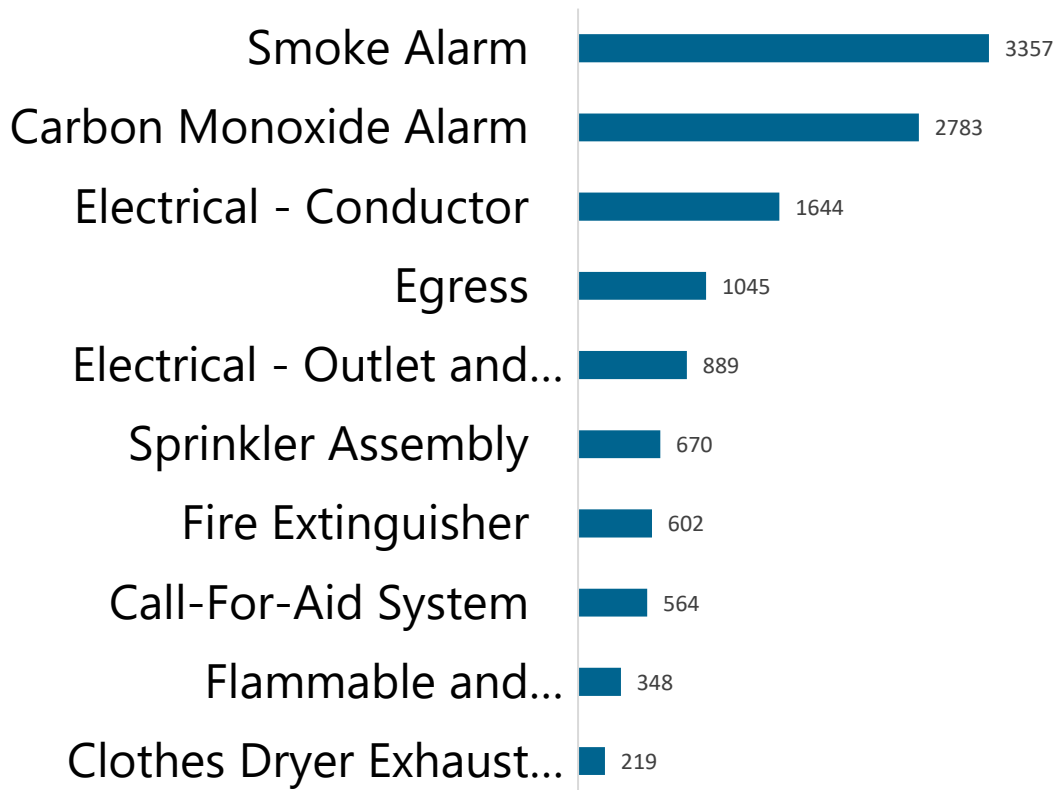


- What to expect before, during, and after an inspection
- Policies and procedures for properties participating in inspections
- Submitting evidence of deficiency correction, submitting technical reviews, administrative review, and other administrative requirements associated with the final NSPIRE rule
- Outlines roles and responsibilities for HUD's REAC, HUD field office staff, and property representatives from PHAs and Property Owners and/or Agents (POAs)
- Requirements for inspectors performing inspections for REAC under contract

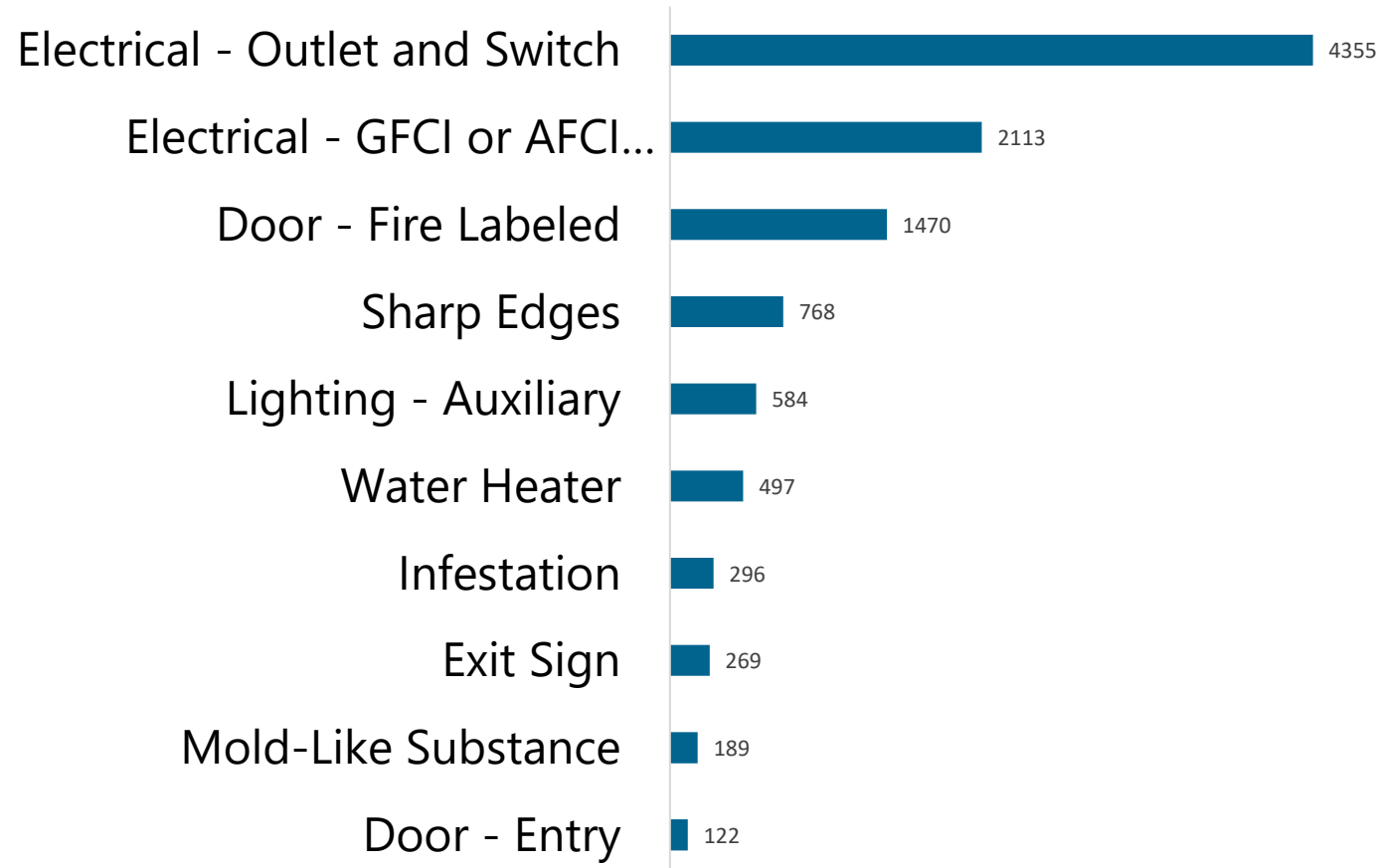
# Top Defects Based on Demonstration



## Top 10 Most Occurring Life Threatening Defects



## Top 10 Most Occurring Severe Defects



# NSPIRE: What's Next?

**Although HUD has published the Rule and regulations necessary to conduct NSPIRE inspections, there is still more to come:**

- **REAC inspections officially began for the Public Housing portfolio on August 10, 2023 and for Multifamily Housing programs on October 1, 2023. These inspections include**
  - 28-day notice of inspection;
  - Pre-inspection collection of safety certificates and lead-based paint evaluations; and
  - NSPIRE system onboarding of HUD field staff and property contacts to see inspection results and upload evidence of correction of Life-threatening and Severe hazards
- Notice on NSPIRE administrative enforcement process
- Notice and rulemaking on HUD inspector administration
  - Inspector training, experience and certification requirements
- Enhanced follow-up assessment program and standards for pests, mold and moisture, life safety systems





# Supporting Residents: NSPIRE's Efforts to Improve Public Housing



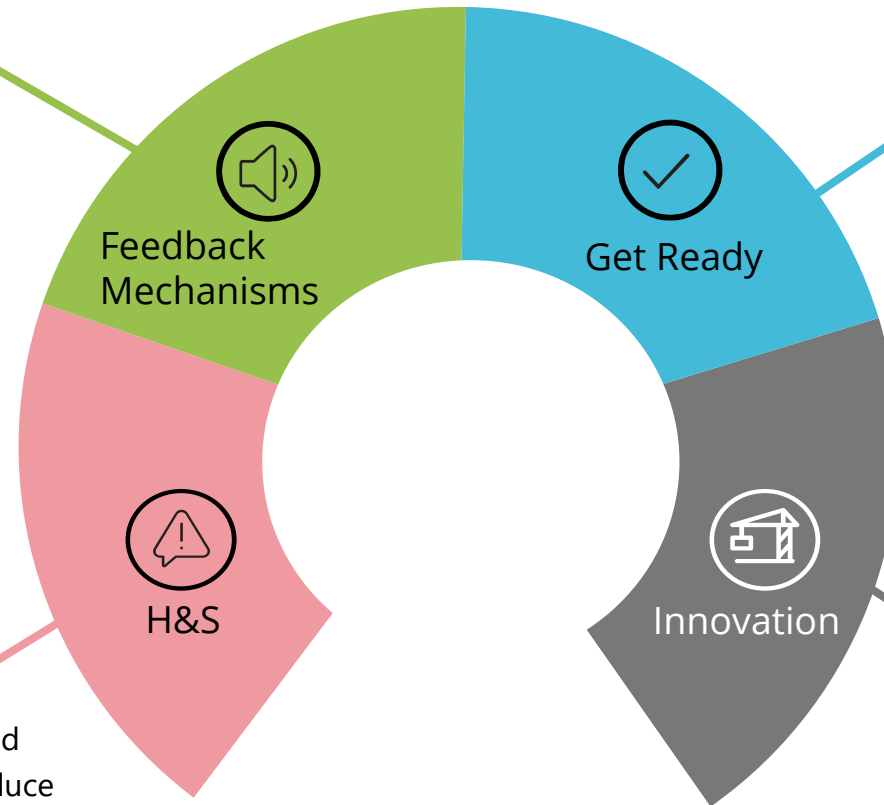
**Objective:** Below is an overview of ways NSPIRE is supporting its residents. The purpose of NSPIRE is to strengthen HUD's physical condition standards to ensure residents live in homes that are safe and habitable.

## Resident Engagement and Feedback

- Obtaining feedback from residents through resident workshops to gather input
- Incorporating resident feedback through in-person meetings and formal requests for public comments on ways the department can improve collaboration and resident engagement in the inspection process
- Using HUD Inspection Feedback Surveys to capture residents' input based on their experiences at various touchpoints with REAC inspections

## Health and Safety Prioritization

- Requiring property owners to address health and safety issues within a specified timeframe to reduce risks to residents
- Developing H&S and inspection informational flyers



## Information and Education

- Creating a dedicated webpage for HUD resident engagement
- Offering training sessions for residents and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the program and its benefits
- Hosting NSPIRE informational sessions to inform stakeholders of new processes and the NSPIRE application

## Housing Improvement and Innovation

- Improving NSPIRE program effectiveness by adopting new technology and automation tools
- Advancing resident engagement through multiple communication channels



# NSPIRE

## Questions and Feedback

[NSPIRE@hud.gov](mailto:NSPIRE@hud.gov) or search for "HUD NSPIRE" found on HUD.gov

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