



April 28, 2025

Dear WHA HCV Landlord/Owner:

We are writing to inform you of significant updates impacting landlords participating in the Section 8 Voucher Program. Units subsidized by this program have traditionally been subject to the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. Beginning **October 1, 2025**, the new **National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE)** will replace HQS, introducing a new framework for evaluating deficiencies. These changes are designed to enhance housing quality while providing clear guidelines for compliance.

The new NSPIRE model prioritizes health, safety, and functional defects over appearance. It implements inspections that better reflect the true physical conditions of the property. The NSPIRE model supports the adoption of sound, year-round maintenance practices.

Notable Changes Effective October 1, 2025:

1. Smoke Detectors:

- All battery-operated smoke detectors must be replaced with **sealed, tamper-proof battery smoke detectors**.
- Carbon monoxide detection devices are required in units with **fuel-burning appliances and/or a fireplace**.

2. Bedroom Smoke Detectors:

- Smoke detectors are now required in **every bedroom** of the assisted unit, per HUD NSPIRE and Massachusetts State Law.

3. Placement of Smoke Detectors:

- Smoke detectors must comply with the **National Fire Prevention Association** standards:
 - Ceiling-mounted detectors must be installed more than four (4) inches from the wall.
 - Wall-mounted detectors must be positioned four (4) to twelve (12) inches from the ceiling.
 - Detectors must not be installed within thirty-six (36) inches of windows, exterior doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with operation.

- Smoke alarms must not be painted or have stickers or other decorations.

4. Ungrounded Outlets:

- Any outlet with 3 3-prong must be grounded and wired correctly. 2-prong wiring is okay. It is recommended for all owners/landlords to buy a receptacle tester with a GFI and check all outlets.

5. GFI Outlets:

- GFI outlets are going to be required for any outlet within six (6) feet of a water source. This includes bathroom sinks, kitchen sinks, washers, and refrigerators.

6. Exterior Outlets:

- All exterior outlets must be GFI protected and have a weather-resistant cover.

7. Water Heaters:

- Water heaters must have a TPR valve and must extend 2-6 inches from the floor.
- The cover for the burner assembly must be on and secured to the water heater.

8. Dryer Hose:

- Dryer hoses must be aluminum material. Plastic is no longer acceptable. Duct tape is **NOT** acceptable for repairs to the hose. It must be aluminum tape.

NSPIRE Rating System and Correction Timelines:

Ratings	Corrective Due Date	Definition
Life Threatening	Within 24 hours	Poses an extreme, high risk to tenant health or safety.
Severe	Within 24 hours to 30 days	Present a high risk of permanent disability, serious injury, or illness to a resident.
Moderate	Within 30 days	May compromise the physical security of a resident or their property.
Low	Within 60 days	Does not present a substantive health or safety risk to residents.

These updates reflect a broader approach to housing quality, emphasizing both safety and accountability.

HUD NSPIRE Webinar for Landlords:

To assist with the transition to NSPIRE, HUD hosted a webinar specifically for landlords on **February 26, 2025**. This session focused on what landlords need to know about NSPIRE for the Housing Choice Voucher program. To access the webinar, please visit the Past Trainings and Webinar page:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/public-housing/nspire-inspections-landlord-resources/>

Topics to Be Covered:

- New NSPIRE standards for landlords
- Differences between HQS and NSPIRE
- Types of deficiencies and correction timeline
- Common deficiencies
- Best practices
- Questions and answers

We strongly encourage you to view this webinar by accessing the recorded session and materials afterward.

Additional Resources

To help you prepare, the following resources are available:

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/reac/nspire

The HUD website has several resources available.

<https://usinspectiongroup.com/nspire-in-2/>

This website has several 2-minute videos showcasing key aspects of NSPIRE that set it apart from outdated UPCS and HQS standards, including insights on potential capital improvements required for “NSPIRE Compliance”. As well, this website has an easily accessible online training program tailored specifically for landlords, ensuring the transition to NSPIRE is informative and comprehensive: <https://usinspectiongroup.com/webinar-schedule/>

<https://www.reacpretraining.com/courses/NSPIREVForLandlords>

This website has training and an NSPIRE manual for the Housing Choice Voucher program.

www.woburnhousing.org- The WHA website provides guidance for NSPIRE inspections including a list of areas that are capable of being inspected or observed.

Contact Information

The WHA understands that change can be hard, but we are here and fully committed to helping all our participants, landlords, and property owners transition into NSPIRE smoothly. If you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact me or my HQS inspector Kim Reid at kreid323@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the Housing Choice Voucher program. Your collaboration is vital to our mission of providing quality housing for our community.
Respectfully,

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