

# Landlord Brief for NSPIRE Inspections

Effective April 1, 2025 Spokane Housing Authority (SHA) will be changing their inspection requirements from the current Housing Quality Standards (HQS) to National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE). One major change is that NSPIRE has minimum habitability requirements for each area of a building (the unit, the building inside, and the building outside).

The inside, outside, and unit must be free of health and safety hazards that pose a danger to residents. Types of health and safety concerns include, but are not limited to, carbon monoxide, electrical hazards, extreme temperature, flammable materials or other fire hazards, garbage and debris, handrail hazards, infestation, lead-based paint, mold, and structural soundness [24 CFR 5.703(e)]. There are several changes to the requirements and we encourage you to review the provided resources at the links provided in this newsletter.

Additionally, The Public and Federally Assisted Housing Fire Safety Act of 2022 requires all smoke alarms to have a sealed battery beginning December 29, 2024. This will also be enforced through NSPIRE.

## Examples of just a few of the changes you will see with NSPIRE:

- The interior wall (unit or inside) hole sizes have changed to not greater than 2 inches in diameter or an accumulation of holes that are cumulatively greater than 6 inches by 6 inches.
- A parking lot pothole that is 4 inches deep and 1 square foot or greater will require repair.
- No non-protected (GFCI) outlets within 6 feet of a water source
- Water Heater discharge piping must terminate 6 inches or less from the waste receptor flood level
- Smoke alarms are required on each level of the home and inside each sleeping area

Please view HUD's complete NSPIRE Checklist and tips for preparing for an NSPIRE inspection [here](#):

[https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/NSPIRE\\_Fillable\\_Checklist.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/NSPIRE_Fillable_Checklist.pdf)

<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/NSPIRE-Preparing-for-an-NSPIRE-Inspection-Job-Aid.pdf>

## Correction Timeframes

When a unit does not pass inspection, landlords will be notified of what needs to be corrected. Each deficiency is identified in the NSPIRE standards as either lifethreatening, severe, moderate, or low.

- **Life-threatening deficiencies** must be corrected within 24 hours after notice has been provided. Please see a list of life threatening deficiencies listed in Attachment A below.
- **Severe and Moderate deficiencies** must be corrected within 30 days after notice has been provided.
- **Low level deficiencies** will only be noted by the inspector for informational purposes.

## Extensions

Extensions on repair deadlines for Non-Life Threatening deficiencies can still be requested from SHA, and may be granted on a case by case basis. Please contact the SHA Inspection team if you need an extension to complete the necessary corrections.

## Who is responsible for repairs?

### Family Responsibilities

The family is held responsible for the following deficiencies:

- Tenant-paid utilities not in service
- Damage to the unit or premises caused by a household member or guest beyond ordinary wear and tear (damages which could be assessed against the security deposit under state law or in court practice).

If the family fails to correct a discrepancy or allow the landlord to correct it within the period allowed SHA will terminate the family's assistance

### Landlord Responsibilities

The landlord is responsible for all NSPIRE deficiencies not listed as a Family Responsibility above.

If the landlord fails to correct deficiencies by the time specified, Spokane Housing Authority must stop housing assistance payments (abatement) no later than the first of the month following the specified correction period (including any approved extension) [24 CFR 985.3(f)]. No retroactive payments will be made to the owner for the period of time the rent was abated. If the repairs are not made by the end of the abated month, Housing Assistance Payments are terminated fully.

*Owner rents are not abated as a result of deficiencies that are the family's responsibility.*

### SHA Implementation of NSPIRE

January 2025-March 2025 SHA will be continuing HQS inspections, but will be noting any NSPIRE related deficiencies seen during the course of inspection, and providing those to landlords as an education, preparation method. Repairs on NSPIRE deficiencies during this time are not required to continue receiving Housing Assistance payments, but will be suggested.

SHA is committed to supporting landlords through this transition to the NSPIRE standards. Over the next few months, we will be providing additional resources, including informative materials and interactive information sessions designed to help you navigate the new standards. Please watch for information session dates and other important NSPIRE information coming soon.

Beginning April 1, 2025 SHA will be fully implementing NSPIRE inspection standards, and all NSPIRE deficiencies must be completed within the required time frame in order to continue receiving Housing Assistance Payments.

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time with any questions you have about NSPIRE by emailing our landlord liaison at [LLinfo@spokanehousing.org](mailto:LLinfo@spokanehousing.org)

## Common Life Threatening Deficiencies

NSPIRE life-threatening deficiencies that **must be corrected within 24 hours.**

Inspectable Item	Deficiency
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	Carbon monoxide alarm is missing, not installed, or not installed in a proper location. Carbon monoxide alarms are required inside units and in inside areas such as hallways that contain a fuel-burning appliance or fireplace, cabanas, pool rooms, or other common area amenities
	Carbon monoxide alarm is obstructed.
	Carbon monoxide alarms do not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.
Chimney	A visually accessible chimney, flute, or firebox connected to a fireplace or wood-burning appliance is incomplete or damaged such that it may not safely contain fire and convey smoke and combustion gases to the exterior.
	Chimney exhibits signs of structural failure.
Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ventilation	The dryer transition duct is detached or missing.
	The dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.
Egress	Obstructed means of egress.
	The sleeping room is located on the third floor or below and has an obstructed rescue opening.
	Fire escape is obstructed.
Electrical – Conductor, Outlet, and Switch	The outlet or switch is damaged.
	Exposed electrical conductor.
Exit Sign	Exit sign is damaged, missing, obstructed, or not adequately illuminated.
Fire Extinguisher	Fire extinguisher pressure gauge reads over or under-charged.
	Fire extinguisher service tag is missing, illegible, or expired.
	The fire extinguisher is damaged or missing.
Guardrail	Guardrail is missing, not installed, or not functionally adequate
Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)	The inspection date is on or between October 1 and March 31 and the permanently installed heating source is not working or the permanently installed heating source is working and the interior temperature is below 64 degrees Fahrenheit.

Inspectable Item	Deficiency
	Combustion chamber cover or gas shutoff valve is missing from a fuel burning heating appliance.
	Fuel burning heating system or device exhaust vent is misaligned, blocked, disconnected, improperly connected, damaged, or missing.
Leak – Gas or Oil	Natural gas, propane, or oil leak.
Mold-like Substance	The presence of mold-like substances at extremely high levels is observed visually.
Smoke Alarm	Smoke alarm is not installed where required.
	The smoke alarm is obstructed.
	Smoke alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.
Water Heater	Chimney or flue piping is blocked, misaligned, or missing.
	The gas shutoff valve is damaged, missing, or not installed.
Other	Utilities not in service, including no running hot water