CHA Inspections: Get Ready for NSPIRE Part 2

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Owner SYMPOSIUM 2026

Agenda

- NSPIRE: What and Why
- NSPIRE Standards
- NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist
- Understanding Life-Threatening Deficiencies
- Proactive Tips for Passing Inspection
- Online Resources
- Q&A

What is NSPIRE?

- National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE)
  - Replaces Uniform Physical Conditions Standards (UPCS) for Public Housing and Multifamily Housing
  - Redefines Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Programs
  - Prioritizes health, safety, and functional and structural defects
  - Puts the focus on the areas that impact residents the most
  - Goal is to align standards across HUD housing

Why the Change?

- Congress directed HUD to align inspection standards across all HUD-assisted properties
- NSPIRE focuses on prioritizing resident health and safety
- NSPIRE is based on objective criteria to eliminate “gray areas”
- NSPIRE encourages proactive and preventative maintenance
- Implementing NSPIRE results in improved housing quality

What to Expect

- All voucher programs must implement NSPIRE by February 1, 2027
- NSPIRE changes CHA Inspection Standards, not policies
  - Types of inspections (i.e., initial, periodic, interim, PBV turnover, etc.) remain the same
  - Frequency of inspections remain the same
  - Who conducts inspections (i.e., PHAs, Contractors, Independent Entities) remains the same
  - Inspections of voucher units remain pass/fail (no scoring)
  - HUD-approved variations are still allowed
  - Enforcement of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contracts (for housing providers) is still required
  - Enforcement of Family Obligations (for voucher holders) is still required

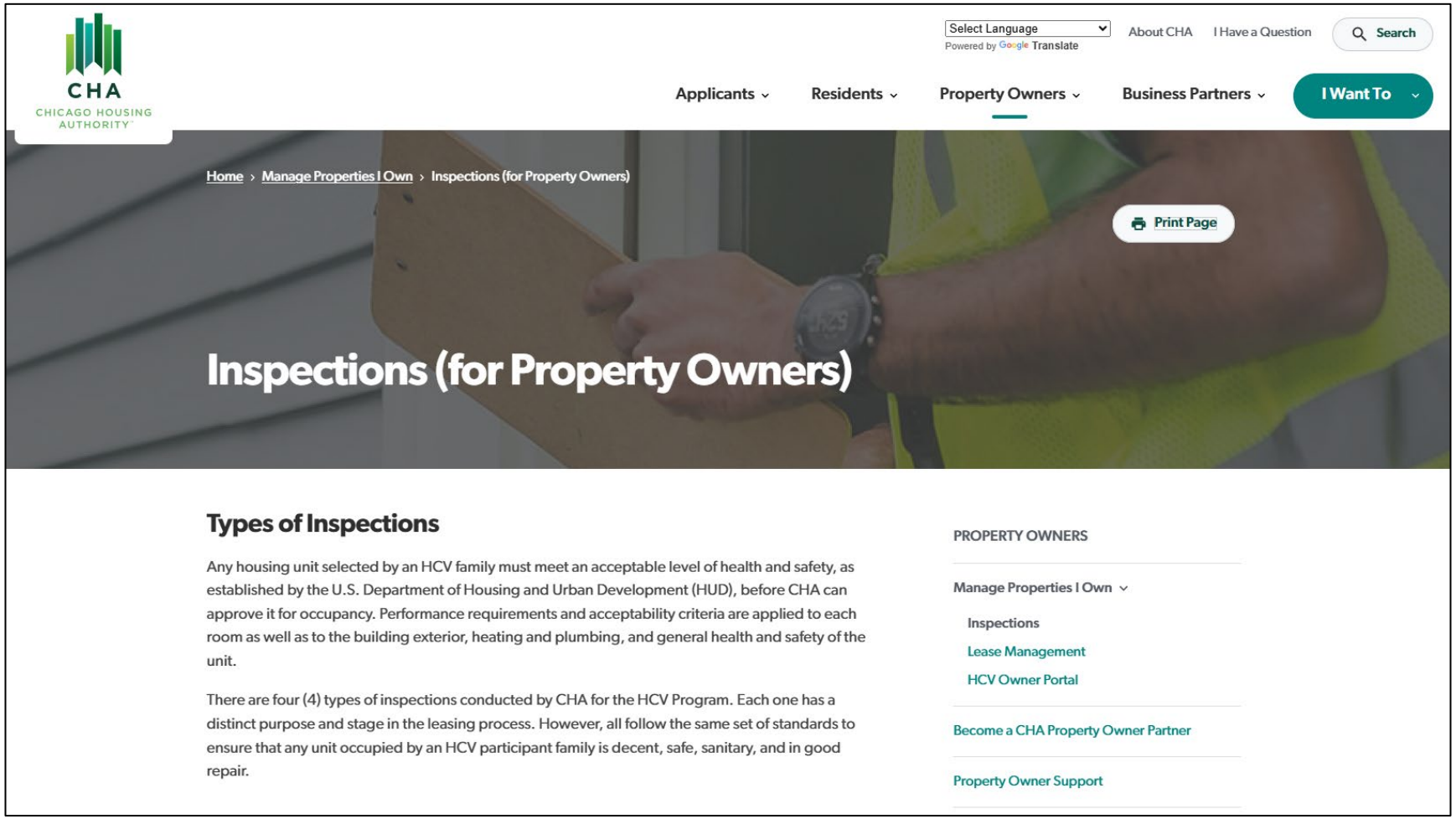
NSPIRE Standards

- Standards are still under development
  - HUD will update every 3 years with public comment
- Approximately 63 inspection standards
  - 180 possible deficiencies

Current Standards

STANDARDS	Version	Last Updated	Inspectable area(s) standard applies to:		
			Unit	Inside	Outside
Address and Signage Standard	2.2	06-23-2022			Y
Bathtub and Shower Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	
Cabinets Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	
Call-for-Aid System Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	
Carbon Monoxide Alarm Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	
Ceiling Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	
Chimney Standard	2.2	06-23-2022	Y	Y	Y

Where can the NSPIRE Standards be found?



How to Read a Standard

Front Matter

High-level information about the standard, including terms related to the inspectable item and any clarifications or exceptions

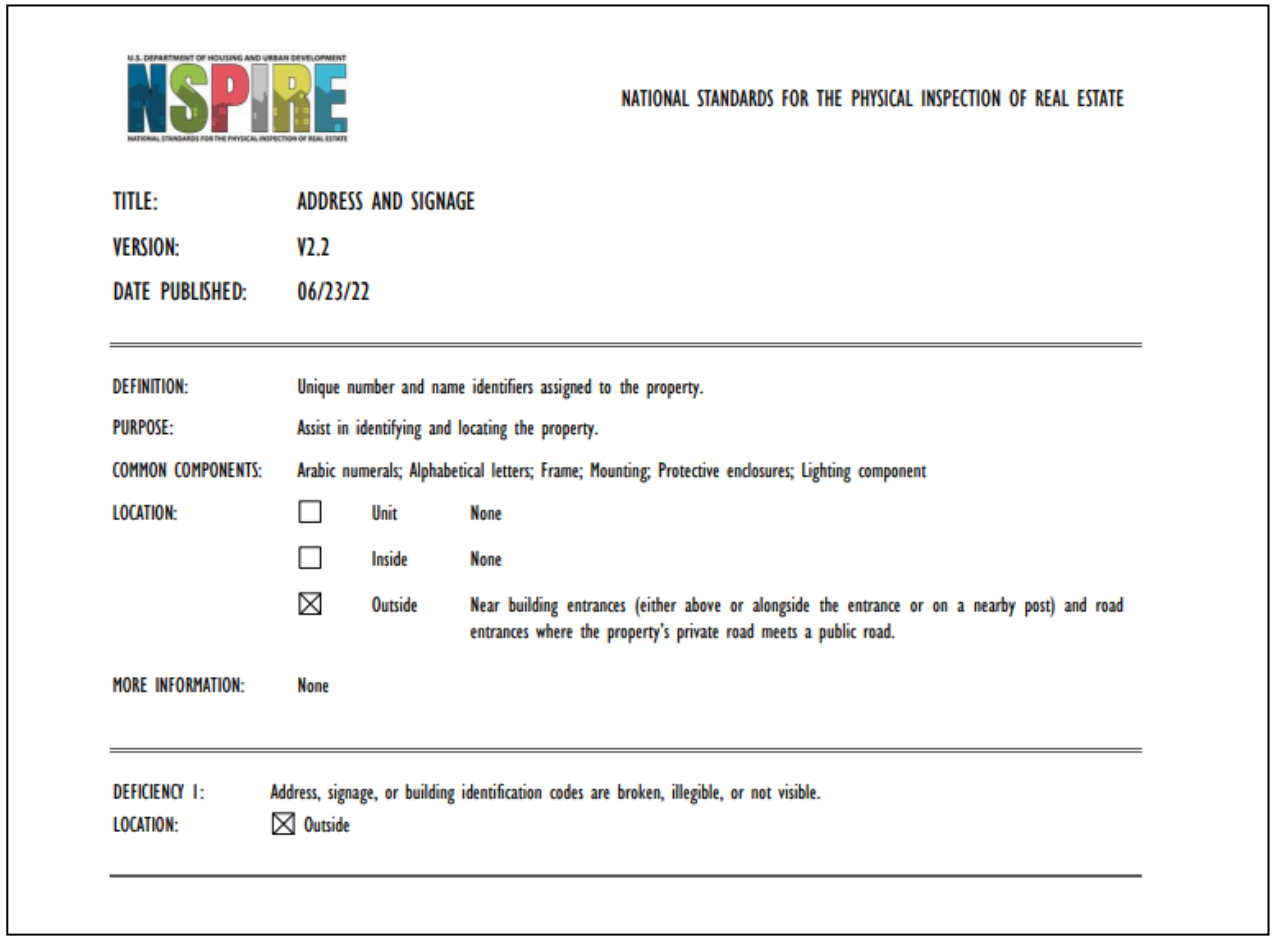
Deficiency

Detail on each applicable deficiency by location (s)

Summary of changes

Gives historical timeline of when changes occurred

Front Matter



NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF REAL ESTATE

TITLE: ADDRESS AND SIGNAGE

VERSION: V2.2

DATE PUBLISHED: 06/23/22

DEFINITION: Unique number and name identifiers assigned to the property.

PURPOSE: Assist in identifying and locating the property.

COMMON COMPONENTS: Arabic numerals; Alphabetical letters; Frame; Mounting; Protective enclosures; Lighting component

LOCATION:

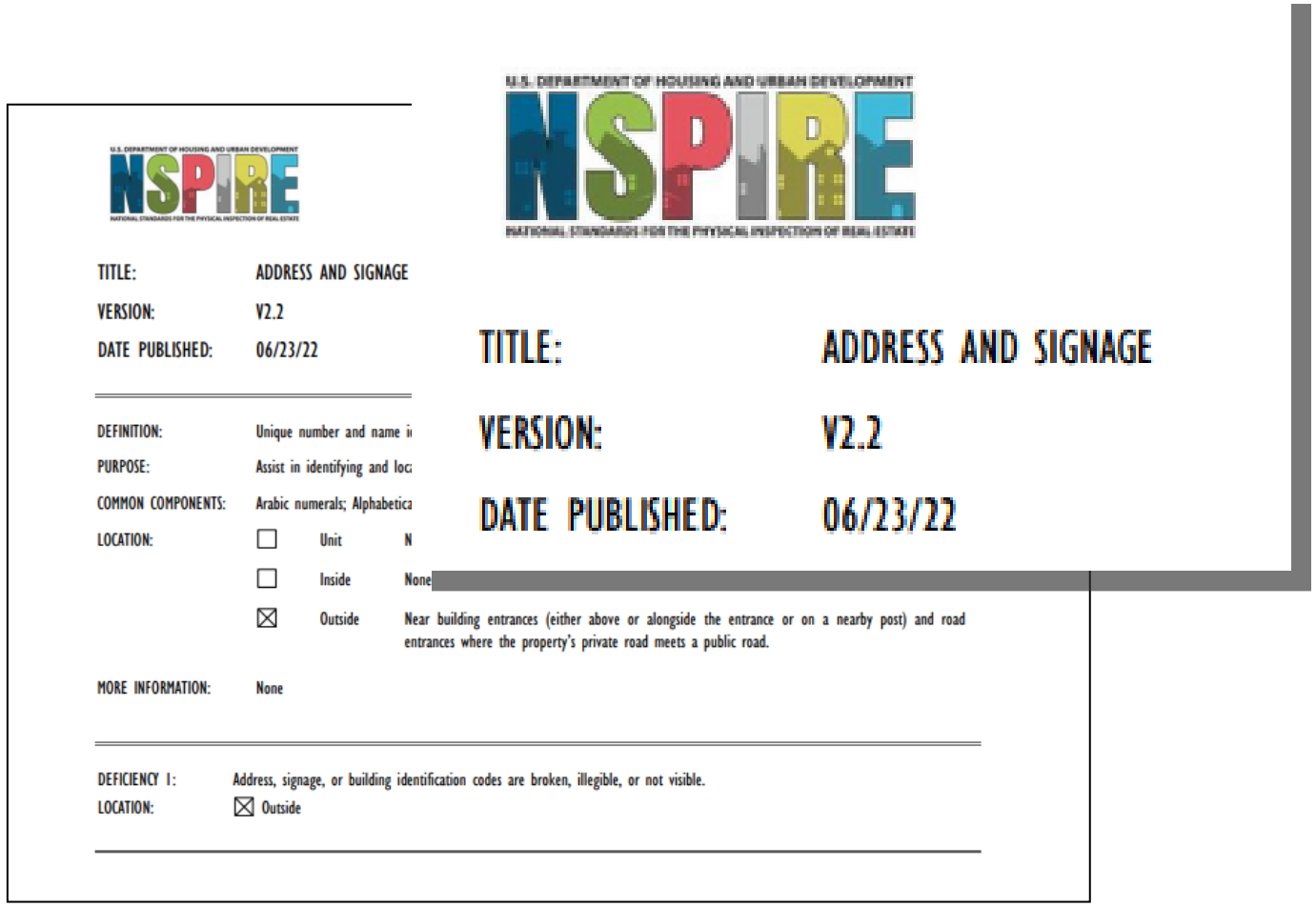
☐	Unit	None
☐	Inside	None
☒	Outside	Near building entrances (either above or alongside the entrance or on a nearby post) and road entrances where the property's private road meets a public road.

MORE INFORMATION: None

DEFICIENCY 1: Address, signage, or building identification codes are broken, illegible, or not visible.

LOCATION: ☒ Outside

Front Matter



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LOCATION:

☐ Unit N

☐ Inside None

☒ Outside Near building entrances (either above or alongside the entrance or on a nearby post) and road entrances where the property's private road meets a public road.

MORE INFORMATION: None

DEFICIENCY 1: Address, signage, or building identification codes are broken, illegible, or not visible.

LOCATION: ☒ Outside

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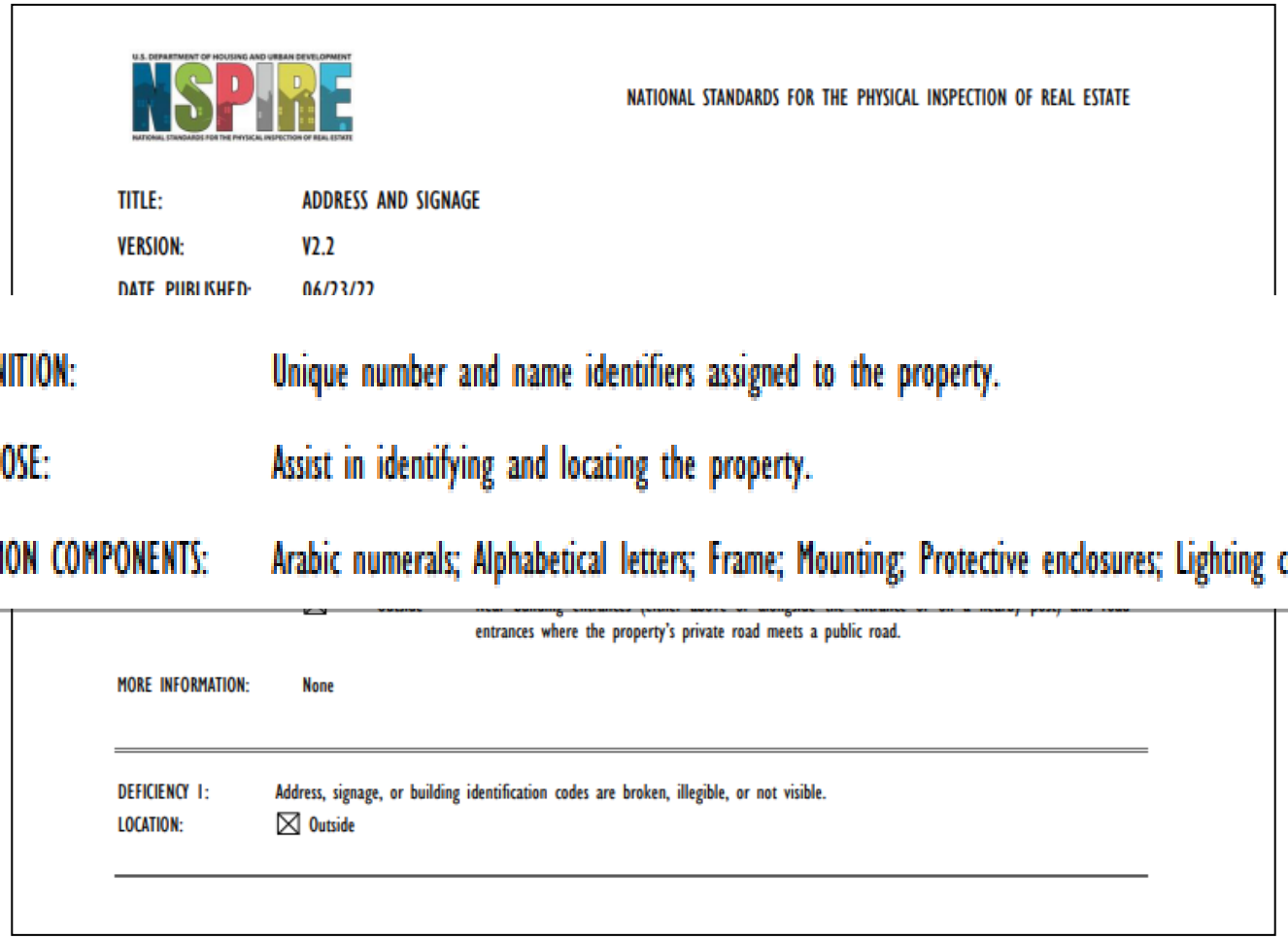

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☒ Outside entrances where the property's private road meets a public road.

MORE INFORMATION: None

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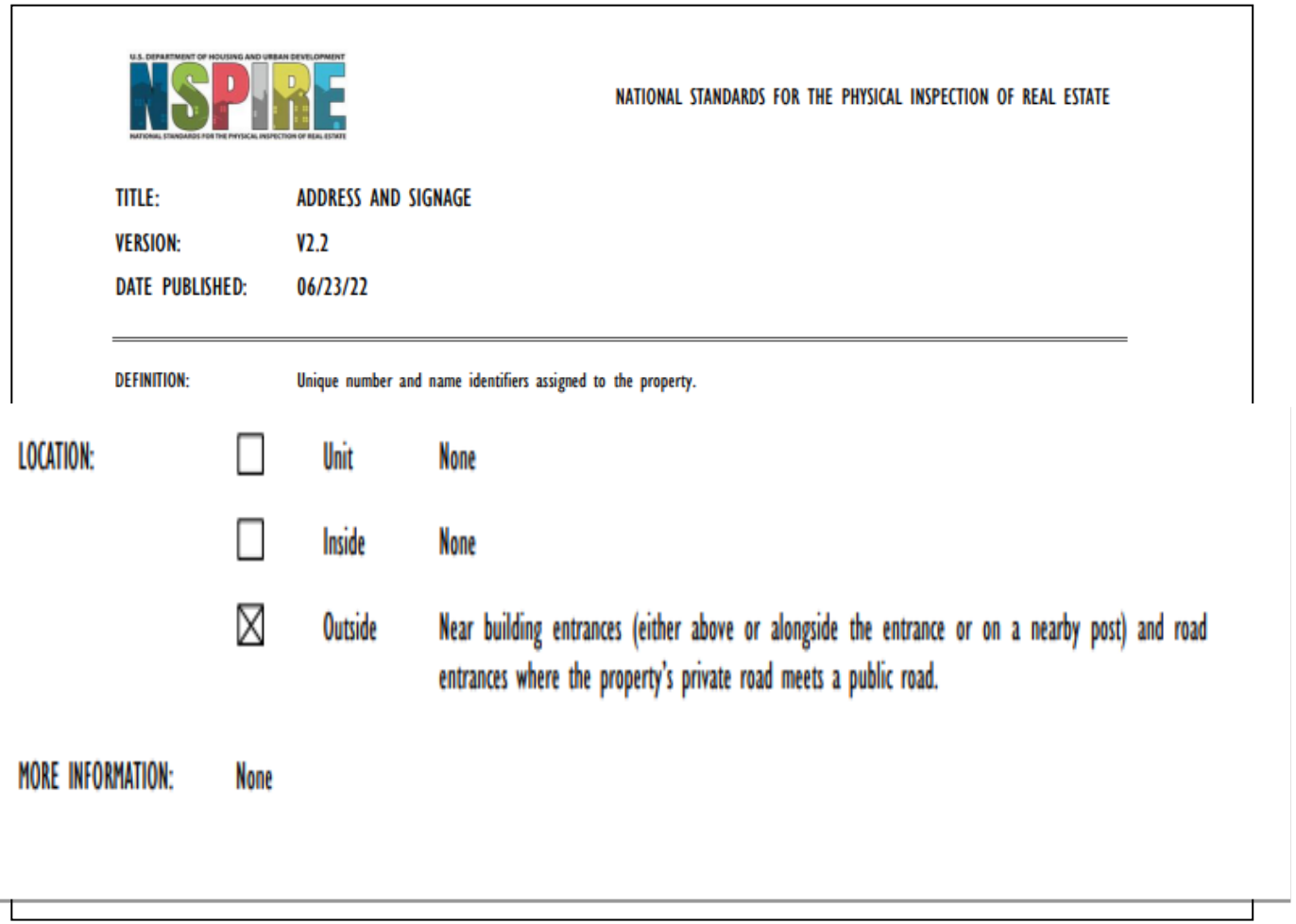
LOCATION: ☒ Outside

Front Matter



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	☒	Outside	Near building entrances (either above or alongside the entrance or on a nearby post) and road entrances where the property's private road meets a public road.

MORE INFORMATION: None

Front Matter

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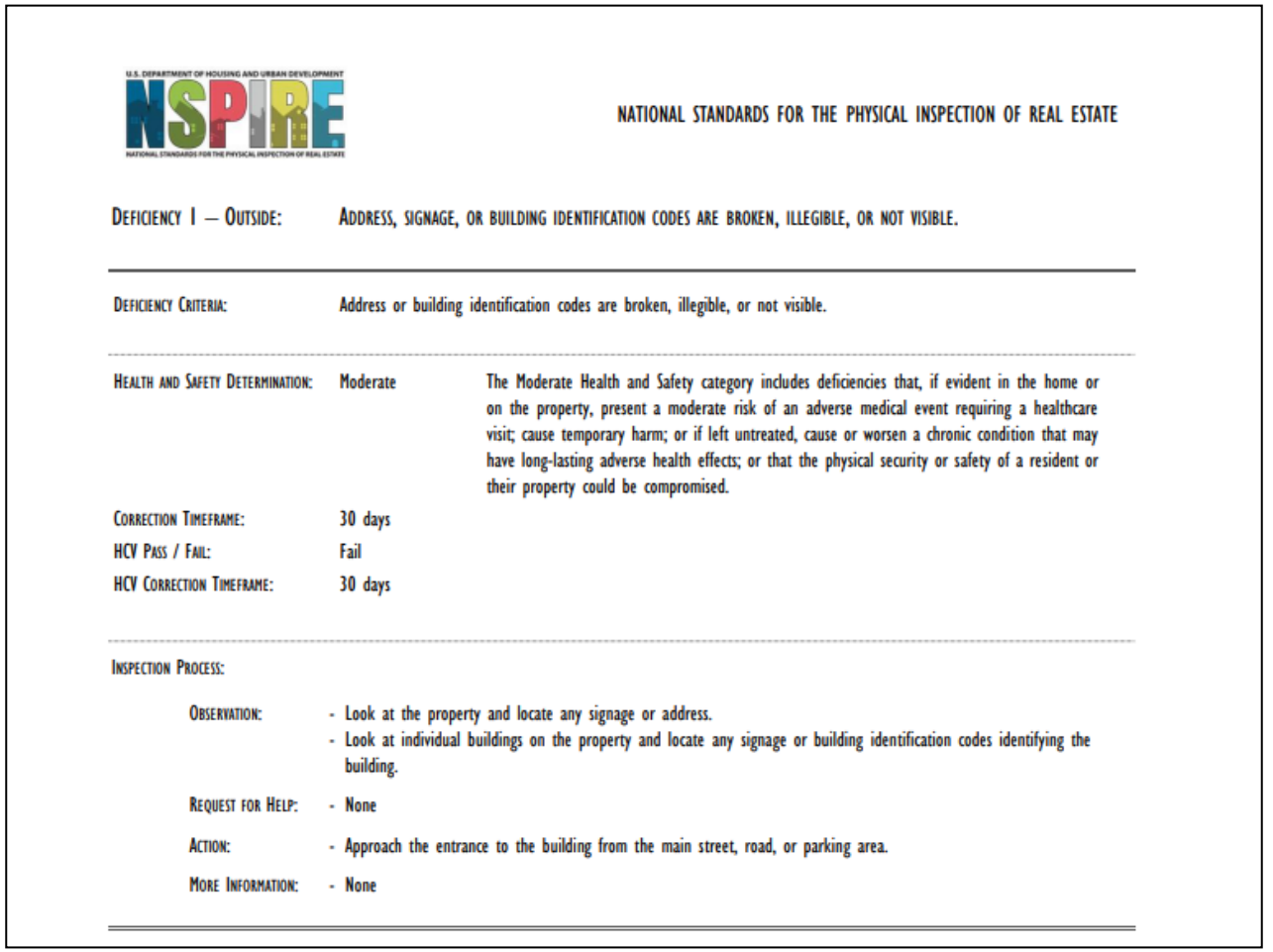
COMMON COMPONENTS:	Arabic numerals; Alphabetical letters; Frame; Mounting; Protective enclosures; Lighting component		
LOCATION:	☐	Unit	None
	☐	Inside	None
	☒	Outside	Near building entrances (either above or alongside the entrance or on a nearby post) and road entrances where the property's private road meets a public road.
MORE INFORMATION:	None		

DEFICIENCY 1:	Address, signage, or building identification codes are broken, illegible, or not visible.
LOCATION:	☒ Outside

Second Section



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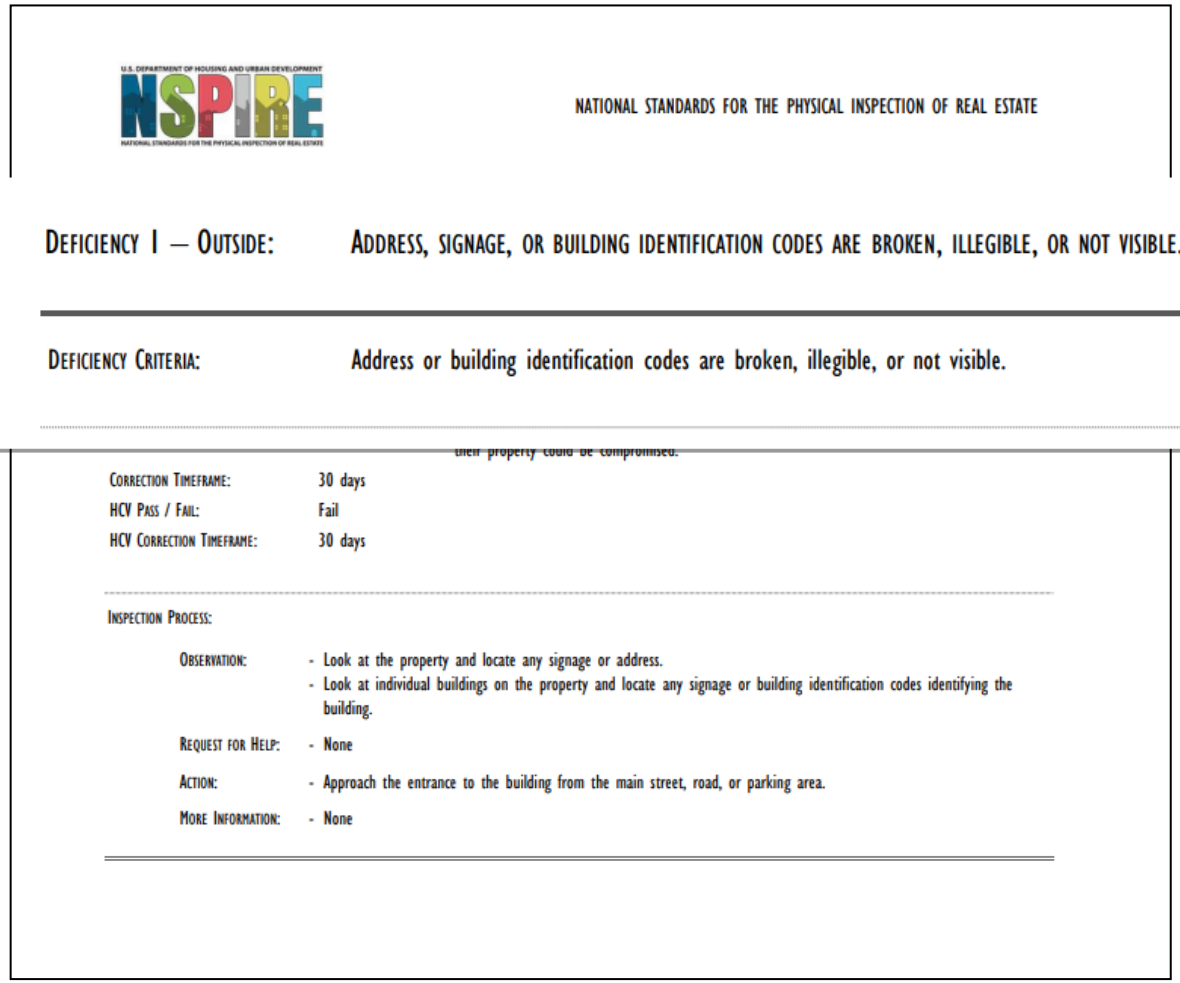
DEFICIENCY 1 — OUTSIDE: ADDRESS, SIGNAGE, OR BUILDING IDENTIFICATION CODES ARE BROKEN, ILLEGIBLE, OR NOT VISIBLE.

DEFICIENCY CRITERIA:	Address or building identification codes are broken, illegible, or not visible.	
HEALTH AND SAFETY DETERMINATION:	Moderate	The Moderate Health and Safety category includes deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the 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.
CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:	30 days	
HCV PASS / FAIL:	Fail	
HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:	30 days	

INSPECTION PROCESS:

OBSERVATION:	- Look at the property and locate any signage or address. - Look at individual buildings on the property and locate any signage or building identification codes identifying the building.
REQUEST FOR HELP:	- None
ACTION:	- Approach the entrance to the building from the main street, road, or parking area.
MORE INFORMATION:	- None

Deficiency



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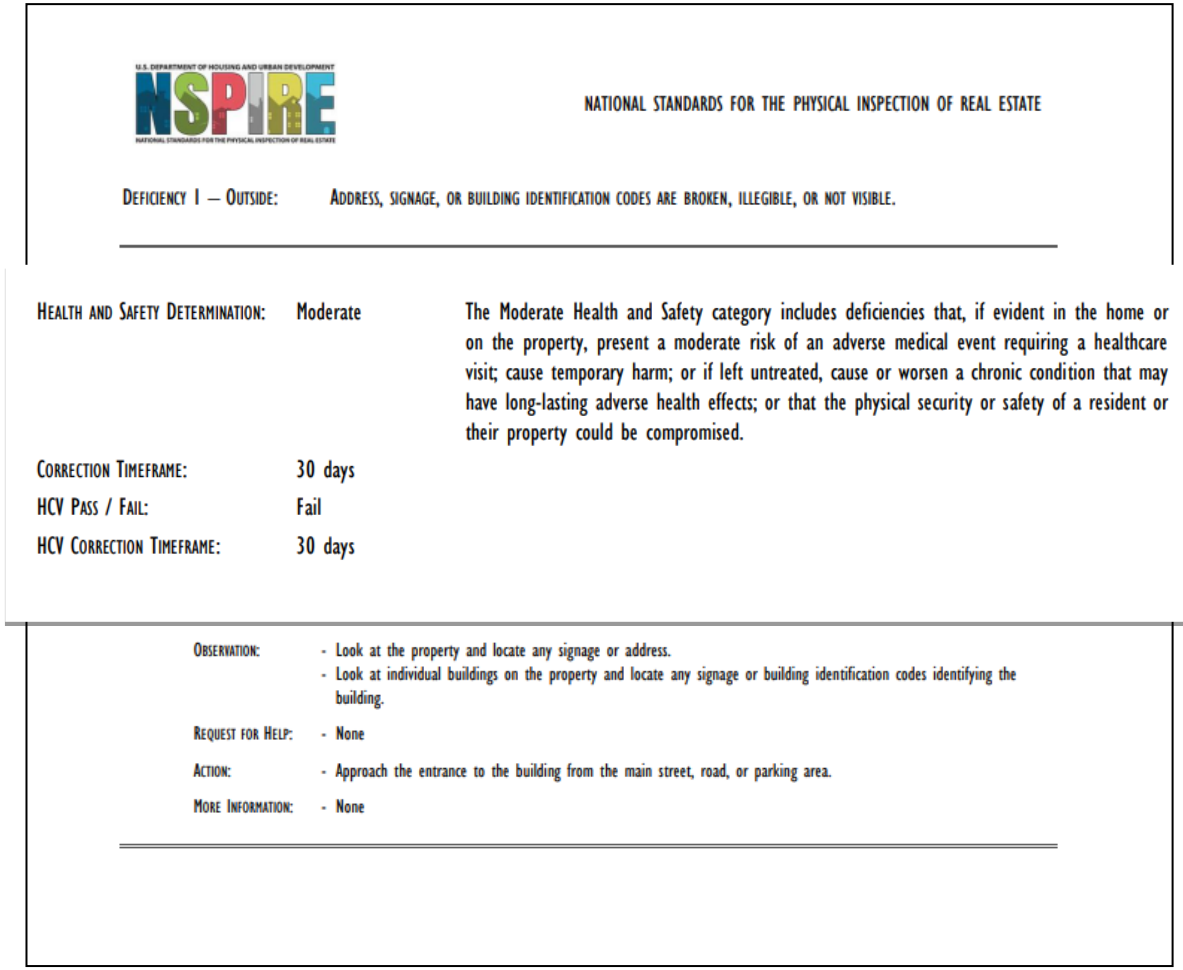
MORE INFORMATION:	- None

Deficiency



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CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:	30 days	
HCV PASS / FAIL:	Fail	
HCV CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:	30 days	

OBSERVATION:	- Look at the property and locate any signage or address. - Look at individual buildings on the property and locate any signage or building identification codes identifying the building.
REQUEST FOR HELP:	- None
ACTION:	- Approach the entrance to the building from the main street, road, or parking area.
MORE INFORMATION:	- None

Deficiency

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CORRECTION TIMEFRAME:	30 days	

INSPECTION PROCESS:

OBSERVATION:	- Look at the property and locate any signage or address. - Look at individual buildings on the property and locate any signage or building identification codes identifying the building.
REQUEST FOR HELP:	- None
ACTION:	- Approach the entrance to the building from the main street, road, or parking area.
MORE INFORMATION:	- None

GFCI Front Matter

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NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF REAL ESTATE

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF REAL ESTATE

TITLE:	**ELECTRICAL — GROUND-FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI) OR ARC-FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (AFCI) — OUTLET OR BREAKER**
VERSION:	**V3.0**
DATE PUBLISHED:	**08/11/23**

DEFINITION:	Electrical protection devices		
PURPOSE:	Protect individuals from electrical shock due to ground faults and against fires caused by arc faults		
COMMON COMPONENTS:	Receptacle or outlet; Faceplate; Test and reset buttons; Circuit breaker		
LOCATION:	☒	Unit	Living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, office, mechanical room, closet, hallway, any wall surface.
	☒	Inside	Living room, kitchen, bathroom, office, mechanical room, closet, hallway, any wall surface.
	☒	Outside	Exterior wall surface, service panels, or site.
MORE INFORMATION:	None		

DEFICIENCY 1:	GFCI outlet or GFCI breaker is not visibly damaged and the test or reset button is inoperable.
LOCATION:	☒ Unit ☒ Inside ☒ Outside
DEFICIENCY 2:	AFCI outlet or AFCI breaker is not visibly damaged and the test or reset button is inoperable.
LOCATION:	☒ Unit ☒ Inside ☒ Outside
DEFICIENCY 3:	An unprotected outlet is present within six feet of a water source.
LOCATION:	☒ Unit — Affirmative Habitability Requirement ☒ Inside — Affirmative Habitability Requirement ☒ Outside — Affirmative Habitability Requirement

GFCI Inspection Process

Inspection Process:

Observation:
- Identify all outlets within the Unit.
- Identify water sources (i.e., sink, bathtub, shower, water faucet, toilet) within the same room as each outlet.
- Determine if each outlet within six feet of a water source is GFCI protected.

Request for Help:
- If a personal item (e.g., clothing, small appliance, plant, toy) is concealing the outlet and can reasonably be removed, ask the resident to move the item.

Action:
- Once identified, measure from the center of each water source (i.e., sink, bathtub, shower, water faucet, toilet) to the center of each outlet located within the same room.

More Information:
- Outlet protection methods include GFCI outlet, GFCI breaker, or an outlet wired in series that is protected by another GFCI outlet.
- An outlet dedicated to a major appliance (e.g., water heater, HVAC, refrigerator, washing machine, dishwasher, garbage disposal, appliance that is wall-mounted or installed within a cabinet, etc.) should not be evaluated under this standard, regardless of its distance from the water source.
- A dedicated outlet is a receptacle outlet that is only capable of serving that specific appliance.
- An outlet located below a countertop and within an enclosed cabinet should not be evaluated under this standard, regardless of its distance from the water source.
- An electrical conductor that is not enclosed or properly insulated should be evaluated under the Electrical – Conductor, Outlet, and Switch standard.

NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist

NSPIRE HCV/PBV INSPECTION CHECKLIST

PHA:	Address of Unit:
Family Identifier:	Owner:
Any children under 6 reside or expected to reside in the unit? (Y/N):	Owner Contact Information:
Inspector:	Housing Type:
Date of Inspection:	Year Constructed:
Type of Inspection:	Number of Bedrooms:

Summary Decision on Unit (Pass/Fail):

Health & Safety Designation	Correction Timeframe (P/F)
LT	**Life-Threatening - 24 Hours (Fail)**
S	Severe - 30 Days (Fail)
M	Moderate - 30 Days (Fail)
L	Low - N/A (Pass)

*Affirmative Habitability Requirement per 24 CFR 5.703(d) and NSPIRE Final Rule

Mark all that apply:

Area	Deficiency Description	Unit	Inside	Outside	Inspector Comments
Address and Signage	Address, signage, or building identification codes are broken, illegible, or not visible.			M ☐	
Bathtub and Shower	Only 1 bathtub or shower is present and it is inoperable or does not drain.	S ☐	L ☐		
	A bathtub or shower is inoperable or does not drain and at least 1 bathtub or shower is present elsewhere that is operational.	M ☐	L ☐		
	Bathtub component or shower component is damaged, inoperable, or missing such that it may limit the resident's ability to maintain personal hygiene.	M ☐	L ☐		
	Bathtub component or shower component is damaged, inoperable, or missing and it does not limit the resident's ability to maintain personal hygiene.	L ☐			
	Bathtub or shower cannot be used in private.*	*M☐	M ☐		
Cabinet and Storage	Food storage space is not present.*	*M☐			
	Storage component is damaged, inoperable, or missing.	M ☐	L ☐		
Call-For-Aid System	**System is blocked, or pull cord is higher than 6 inches off the floor.**	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐		
	System does not function properly.	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐		
Carbon Monoxide	**Carbon monoxide alarm is missing, not installed, or not installed in a proper location.***	**LT** ☐			
	Carbon monoxide alarm is obstructed.	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐		
	Carbon monoxide alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐		
Ceiling	Ceiling has an unstable surface.	M ☐	M ☐		
	Ceiling has a hole.	M ☐	M ☐		
	Ceiling component(s) is not functionally adequate.	S ☐	S ☐		
Chimney	**A visually accessible chimney, flue, 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.**	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐	**LT** ☐	
	Chimney exhibits signs of structural failure.			**LT** ☐	

Understanding Life-Threatening Deficiencies

- **10-Year Sealed Lithium Battery Rule:** All standalone, solely battery-operated smoke alarms anywhere on the property MUST be powered by sealed, tamper-resistant, non-removable 10-year lithium batteries. Regular replaceable 9V or AA battery-operated units will fail immediately.

- **The 'Extra Detector' Trap:** If an owner installs extra, non-required smoke detectors (e.g., a decorative or older extra alarm on a wall), and that detector is found non-functional, missing a battery, or broken, it is automatically cited as a **Life-Threatening Deficiency**. If it is present, it must work. Remove unneeded extra detectors before the inspector arrives.

NSPIRE Life-Threatening Deficiencies

Standard	Deficiency Description	Unit	Inside	Outside
Call-For-Aid System	System is blocked, or pull cord is higher than 6 inches off the floor.	LT	LT	
	System does not function properly.	LT	LT	
Carbon Monoxide	Carbon monoxide alarm is missing, not installed, or not installed in a proper location.*	LT		
	Carbon monoxide alarm is obstructed.	LT	LT	
	Carbon monoxide alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.	LT	LT	
Chimney	A visually accessible chimney, flue, 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.	LT	LT	LT
	Chimney exhibits signs of structural failure.			LT
Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ventilation	Electric dryer transition duct is detached or missing.	LT	LT	
	Gas dryer transition duct is detached or missing.	LT	LT	
	Electric dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.	LT	LT	LT
	Dryer transition duct is constructed of unsuitable material.	LT	LT	
	Gas dryer exhaust ventilation system has restricted airflow.	LT	LT	LT
Door - Entry	Entry door is missing.	LT		
Door - Fire	Fire labeled door is missing.	LT	LT	
Egress	Obstructed means of egress.	LT	LT	LT
	Sleeping room is located on the 3rd floor or below and has an obstructed rescue opening.	LT		
	Fire escape access is obstructed.	LT		
	Outlet or switch is damaged.	LT	LT	LT

NSPIRE Life-Threatening Deficiencies

Electrical - Conductor, Outlet, and Switch	Exposed electrical conductor.	LT	LT	LT
	Water is currently in contact with an electrical conductor.	LT	LT	
Electrical - Service Panel	The overcurrent protection device is damaged.	LT	LT	LT
Exit Sign	Exit sign is damaged, missing, obstructed, or not adequately illuminated.		LT	LT
Fire Escape	Fire escape component is damaged or missing.			LT
Fire Extinguisher	Fire extinguisher pressure gauge reads over or under-charged.	LT	LT	LT
	Fire extinguisher service tag is missing, illegible, or expired.	LT	LT	LT
	Fire extinguisher is damaged or missing.	LT	LT	LT
Flammable and Combustible Item	Flammable or combustible item is on or within 3 feet of an appliance that provides heat for thermal comfort or a fuel-burning water heater. OR Improperly stored chemicals.	LT	LT	LT
Guardrail	Guardrail is missing or not installed *	LT	LT	LT
	Guardrail is not functionally adequate.	LT	LT	LT
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 *	LT		
	Unvented space heater that burns gas, oil, or kerosene is present *	LT	LT	
	Combustion chamber cover or gas shutoff valve is missing from a fuel burning heating appliance.	LT	LT	
	Fuel burning heating system or device exhaust vent is misaligned, blocked, disconnected, improperly connected, damaged, or missing.	LT	LT	LT
Leak - Gas/Oil	Natural gas, propane, or oil leak.	LT	LT	LT

NSPIRE Life-Threatening Deficiencies

Mold-Like Substance	Presence of mold-like substance at extremely high levels is observed visually.	LT		
Smoke Alarm	Smoke alarm is not installed where required *	LT	LT	
	Smoke alarm is obstructed.	LT	LT	
	Smoke alarm does not produce an audio or visual alarm when tested.	LT	LT	
Sprinkler Assembly	Sprinkler head assembly is encased or obstructed by an item or object that is within 18 inches of the sprinkler head.	LT	LT	LT
	Sprinkler assembly component is damaged, inoperable, or missing and it is detrimental to performance.	LT	LT	
	Sprinkler assembly has evidence of corrosion.	LT	LT	LT
	Sprinkler assembly has evidence of foreign material that is detrimental to performance.	LT	LT	LT
Structural System	Structural system exhibits signs of serious failure.	LT	LT	LT
Toilet	Only 1 toilet was installed, and it is missing.	LT		
Water Heater	Chimney or flue piping is blocked, misaligned, or missing.	LT	LT	LT
	Gas shutoff valve is damaged, missing, or not installed.	LT	LT	LT

Proactive Tips for Passing Inspection

- **Pre-Inspect and Walk the Unit:** Do not let the inspector be the first person to check your property. Walk the unit 1-2 weeks before with this list. Test every single window, outlet and door.
- **Remove Dead Alarms Immediately:** Tenants often take down chirping smoke detectors and place them in drawers or leave dead older units on walls after installing new ones. Hunt down and remove all disabled or partial units.
- **Address Security at Unit Entry:** Ensure the front and back doors latch completely into the striker plate without needing to be forced or pulled hard.

Proactive Tips for Passing Inspection

- **Check Your Grounding:** Use a three-prong outlet tester to check all GFCI outlets in the kitchen and bathrooms. If they do not trip when you press the button, replace them before the inspector arrives.
- **Perform a 'Water & Wire' Sweep:** Look under sinks, near hot water heaters and behind dishwashers. If there is a water drip splashing near any wire, outlet or appliance motor, it will be cited as a 'Leak – Electrical' 24-hour life-threatening deficiency.
- **Address deteriorated paint:** If the property was built before 1978 and a child under the age of 6 resides in the unit, correcting any signs of deteriorated paint is very important. Deteriorated paint may be found at the unit, inside and outside.

Online Resources

- Scan the QR code to access more information about CHA Inspections, including links to the following NSPIRE Resources:
  - HUD NSPIRE Home Page
  - NSPIRE Standards
  - NSPIRE Inspectable Areas
  - NSPIRE HCV/PBV Inspection Checklist
  - HUD Exchange NSPIRE Trainings and Resources
  - HUD Exchange Online Inspector Training

Questions?

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