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### Landlord Notice: NSPIRE Updates

Effective October 1, 2024, the Housing Authority of San Angelo (HASA) is required to adopt new inspection standards under NSPIRE, the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate. This will replace the previous Housing Quality Standard (HQS) currently in use for the inspections. NSPIRE's mission is to ensure that all residents live in safe, habitable dwellings and to ensure that the items and components located inside the building, outside the building, and within the units of HUD housing are functionally adequate, operable, and free of health and safety hazards. The goals of NSPIRE include prioritizing health and safety of residents and to modernize HUD's inspection process. These standards will be reviewed and updated every three years. This notice is to inform you of the upcoming changes and will highlight standards that the HASA felt would have the most impact on current units. Please note, this is not an all-inclusive list of all changes.

New regulation under 24 CFR 5.703 defines *affirmative habitability requirements*. These are basic requirements for an assisted unit and property that must be met for participation. The HASA will inspect for the items below but may not fail these items until NSPIRE is implemented, i.e. 10/1/2024.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Affirmative Requirement</b>
Electrical – GFCI or AFCI – Outlet or Breaker	Outlets within 6 feet of a water source must be GFCI protected outside the unit, inside the common areas, and inside the unit itself.
Guardrail	There must be a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop off of 30 inches or greater measured vertically.
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	Must meet or exceed the carbon monoxide detection standards set by HUD. See requirements in chart below.
HVAC	May not contain unvented space heaters that burn gas, oil, or kerosene  Must have operable permanently installed heating source from October 1 through March 31
Lighting – Interior	Must have a permanently mounted light fixture in any kitchen and each bathroom
Minimum Electrical and Lighting	Must have at least 2 working outlets or 1 working outlet and 1 permanently installed light fixture within each habitable room
Smoke Alarm	Must include at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke alarm, in proper working condition, in the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On each level of the unit;</li><li>• Inside each bedroom;</li><li>• Within 21 feet of any door to a bedroom measured along a path of travel; and</li><li>• Where a smoke alarm installed outside a bedroom is separated from an adjacent living area by a door, a smoke alarm must also be installed on the living area side of the door.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a unit is occupied by any hearing-impaired person, the smoke alarms must have an alarm system designed for hearing-impaired persons.</li> </ul>
Bathtub and Shower	Include its own bathroom or sanitary facility that is in proper operating condition and usable in privacy – must contain a sink, a bathtub or shower, and an interior flushable toilet.
Cabinet and Storage	Must have food storage space.
Cooking Appliance	Must have a cooking appliance.
Refrigerator	Must have a refrigerator present at the time of each inspection, including initial inspections even if tenant provided.
Food Preparation Area	Must have adequate food preparation area.
Sink	Must have hot and cold running water in both the bathroom and kitchen; including an adequate source of safe drinking water in the bathroom and kitchen.  A sink must be present within the primary kitchen.
Toilet	Must have adequate privacy

The following list is based on commonly found items using previous inspection standards with HQS but will apply the new NSPIRE guidelines. Please note this is not all inclusive of all the standards under NSPIRE but may have differing or more specific criteria to what was under HQS.

Item	NSPIRE	HQS
Bathtub	A deficiency exists if discoloration of 50% or more; otherwise considered cosmetic.	Only checked for a working tub/shower with hot/cold running water in the unit.
Cabinet and Storage	A deficiency exists if 50% or more of the kitchen, bath, or laundry cabinet, drawers, or shelves are damaged, inoperable, or missing. This is evaluated separately by location.	Previously, would fail for missing drawer front no matter overall percentage. NSPIRE is more specific.
Carbon Monoxide Alarm	In regards to CO Alarms, NSPIRE is more specific and uses the following scenarios:  1. If the unit contains a fuel-burning appliance/fireplace, a CO alarm is required in the immediate vicinity of each bedroom or within each bedroom.  2. If a bedroom or bathroom attached to bedroom contains a fuel-burning appliance/fireplace or has adjacent spaces from which byproducts of combustion gases can flow, a CO alarm is required to be installed in each bedroom.	HQS required a CO alarm if the unit has/d a fuel-burning appliance/fireplace. The rule has not changed, NSPIRE is more specific.

	<p>3. If the unit or bedroom is served by a forced-air furnace that is located elsewhere, a CO alarm must be installed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In the immediate vicinity of each bedroom OR</li> <li>b. Within each bedroom, OR</li> <li>c. Within the room or area with the first duct register and the CO alarm signals are automatically transmitted to an approved location.</li> </ul> <p>4. If the unit or bedroom is located in a building that contains a fuel-burning appliance/fireplace, the CO alarm must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. be installed in an approved location between the fuel-burning appliance/fireplace and the unit or bedroom. OR</li> <li>b. be installed on the ceiling of the room containing the fuel burning appliance/fireplace. OR</li> <li>c. be in the immediate vicinity of each bedroom or in each bedroom if the unit or bedroom has communicated openings to the fuel-burning appliance/fireplace.</li> </ul> <p>5. If the unit/bedroom is located one (1) story or less above or below an attached private garage it must have natural ventilation, or if it's enclosed, it must have a ventilation system for vehicle exhaust and a CO alarm must be installed in the immediate vicinity of each bedroom or within each bedroom.</p>	
Ceiling	NSPIRE specifies that if there is a hole that opens directly to the outside environment or if there is a hole present that is 2 inches or greater in diameter, the unit will fail inspection.	HQS only asked the question: is the ceiling sound and free from hazardous defects; gave inspector discretion.
Door – Entry	<p>There is a deficiency if there is a hole ¼ inch or greater in diameter that penetrates all the way through the door OR a split or crack ¼ inch or greater in width that penetrates all the way through the door OR a hole or crack with separation is present, or the glass is missing within the door, side lites, or transom.</p> <p>Regarding weather stripping: if there is a gap of ¼ inch or greater between the door</p>	Under HQS, this fell under “exterior surface” to evaluate if sound and free from hazards at inspector’s discretion; and often was cited under “other” for lack of weather stripping.

	slab and stop molding on the jamb or the jamb itself, or between the bottom of the door and the threshold or floor AND permits light around the closed door, this is a deficiency. <u>NOTE:</u> Entry doors designed without a seal, gasket, or stripping are not considered a deficiency unless there's a ¼ inch or greater gap showing.	
Electrical	<p>All electrical deficiencies are 24 hour fail items. Outlet testing must indicate a three-pronged outlet is properly wired AND grounded unless it's a GFCI. Outlets within 6 feet of a water source are required to be GFCI protected (unless the outlet is a dedicated outlet for a major appliance as it is a receptacle outlet only capable of serving that specific appliance). Other exposed electrical deficiencies will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical conductor is not enclosed or properly insulated or an opening or gap is present and measures greater than ½ inch,</li> <li>• Visible wire nuts on electrical conductors,</li> <li>• Wall-mounted light fixture with a damaged or missing cover.</li> </ul>	HQS did not specifically require a GFCI plug but could have been cited as an electrical hazard at inspector's discretion. Otherwise, only asked "is the room/unit free from electrical hazards?"
Flammable and Combustible Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flammable or combustible item(s) cannot be on or within 3 feet of a fuel burning appliance that provides heat for thermal comfort or a water heater.</li> <li>• Gasoline, kerosene, or propane should never be stored in the unit or common areas.</li> </ul>	Not specifically evaluated; would fall under "other".
Floor	A deficiency exists if 10% or more of the floor substrate area is exposed in any room.	Checked to be sound and free from hazardous defects; did not give specifics.
Foundation	A deficiency exists if a crack is present with a width of ¼ inch or greater and a length of 12 inches or greater; or if the structure has any exposed rebar; or if the foundation is spalling, flaking, or chipping, and the affected area is 12x12 inches or greater and goes into the foundation at a depth of ¾ inch or greater, and/or if water is ponding at the foundation.	Checked to be sound and free from hazards; did not give specifics
Guardrail and/or Handrail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No movement is allowed.</li> <li>• Guardrail is required if walking surface is more than 30 inches above the floor</li> </ul>	Did not specifically address; only required for the 4 risers to have a

	<p>or grade below; guardrail must be 30 inches in height.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handrail is required if 4 or more risers are present; when a ramp has a rise greater than 6 inches or a horizontal projection greater than 72 inches, handrails must be present on both sides.</li> </ul>	handrail; otherwise was considered under “other” or “exterior”
Infestation	<p>Regarding roaches, bed bugs, mice, and rats, etc., initiation or on-going implementation of an appropriate pest management plan meets the requirement for correction of this deficiency. Documentation must be provided for the pest management plan including: start date of plan; servicing scheduled; methods of pest monitoring, managing and treatment; and other factors as determined by HUD, the PHA, and/or other relevant authority.</p>	Checked for evidence for rats, mice or other vermin. NSPIRE more specific and allows for the pest management plan to correct deficiency.
Leak-Sewage System	Sewage cap to the cleanout or pump cover must be attached/present and not damaged.	Did not specifically address in HQS.
Litter/Housekeeping	NSPIRE does not address litter in the unit itself; only outside the unit and in common spaces. NSPIRE also does not address housekeeping so as to not tell someone how to live. Therefore, if all other standards are met, the HASA is unable to fail according to “housekeeping” as an “other” requirement. In majority of cases, if there is a housekeeping or litter concern within the unit, there are other fail items that will still apply.	Inspector typically coded this under “other hazard” or “garbage and debris”.
Minimum Electrical and Lighting	There must be at least 2 working outlets present within each habitable room or at least one working outlet and one permanently installed light fixture present within each habitable room	Same as NSPIRE; no change but included here for reminder.
Mold-Like Substance or “Organic Matter”	<p>Includes what’s often identified as “mildew”, i.e. small patches, generally on non-porous surfaces, and dusty (friable) when dry. NSPIRE inspectors are not certified mold specialists but will document by observation the level of mold-like substance that is present under the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate Level – cumulative area of patches is more than 4 sq inches and less than 1 sq foot in a room, 30-day correction timeframe</li> <li>• High Level – cumulative area of patches more than 1 sq foot and less</li> </ul>	Did not address Mold-Like substances specifically; would review as potential leak, or “other hazard”.

	<p>than 9 sq feet in a room, 30-day correction timeframe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely High Level – cumulative area of patches is more than 9 sq feet in a room, 24-hour correction timeframe if in the unit and resident should be temporarily relocated.</li> </ul>	
Parking Lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there is any one potholder that is 4 inches deep and 1 square foot or greater, there is a deficiency.</li> <li>If the parking lot has ponding more than 3 inches of water accumulated in a parking lot and 5% or more of the parking lot is unusable, there is a deficiency.</li> </ul>	Not specified in HQS; this was evaluated as site and neighborhood conditions. NSPIRE does not address neighborhood conditions.
Potential Lead Based Paint Hazard	<p>Units constructed prior to 1978 and a child of less than 6 years of age resides or is expected to reside in such unit. Each unit must have a LBP disclosure and considers visual assessment to determine if paint is deteriorated (e.g., peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking, or detached from the substrate). Inspector will be measuring surface areas as applicable for deteriorated paint as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than or equal to 2 sq feet per room or less than or equal to 10% per component, this is “below de minimis” and still requires correction but the lead safe practices are not necessarily required.</li> <li>More than 2 sq feet per room or greater than 10% per component and requires paint stabilization within 30 days using lead safe work practices.</li> <li>If outside surface area of deteriorated paint is less than or equal to 20 sq feet, needs repair but is moderate level/fail.</li> <li>If outside surface area of deteriorated paint is more than 20 sq feet, this is severe level/fail and requires lead safe practices for repair.</li> </ul>	LBP was still considered under HQS – NSPIRE gives more specific measures to follow and gives recommendations for lead safe practices.
Sidewalk, walkway, and ramp	<p>If determined not functionally adequate, there is a deficiency. Conditions for functional adequacy include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Damage or deterioration to the extent it disrupts a person’s ability to traverse the plane;</li> </ul>	Checked to be sound and free from hazardous defects; did not give specifics.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unintentional dimensional changes that may interrupt a person's walking pattern or movement; or</li> <li>• Unstable material, etc.</li> </ul>	
Smoke Alarm	<p>If mounted on the ceiling, it must be greater than 4 inches from the wall; if mounted on the wall, the top edge of the smoke alarm cannot be closer than 4 inches or greater than 12 inches from the ceiling; should be installed at least 10 feet from a cooking appliance; should not be installed near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with operation; should not be painted or have decorative stickers or other decorations present.</p> <p>The unit must have at least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On each level of the unit</li> <li>• Inside each bedroom;</li> <li>• Within 21 feet of any door to a bedroom measured along a path of travel; and</li> <li>• Where a smoke detector is installed outside a bedroom is separated from an adjacent living area by a door, a smoke detector must also be installed on the living area side of the door.</li> </ul> <p><b>NEW! As of 12/29/2024, the Public and Federally Assisted Housing Fire Safety Act of 2022 will require sealed batteries.</b></p>	<p>Allowed local code to determine as long as at least one smoke alarm was present in accordance with local requirements. NSPIRE now defines for all units to be treated the same.</p>
Trip Hazard	<p>This deficiency applies if there is an abrupt change in vertical elevation or horizontal separation on any walking surface along the normal path of travel, consisting of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An unintended <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> inch or greater vertical difference. OR</li> <li>• An unintended 2 inch or greater horizontal separation that is perpendicular to the path of travel.</li> </ul>	Inspector discretion
Ventilation	<p>Ventilation or dehumidification is required in the bathroom, i.e. there must be an exhaust fan, window, or adequate means of ventilation or dehumidification present and operable. An AC vent that does not pull air out of the bathroom is not sufficient. Ventilation is not required in the kitchen</p>	<p>Checked for adequate ventilation for operable windows or working vent system; NSPIRE is more specific with</p>

	but if vent hood is present, it must be functional.	“dehumidifier” option.
Wall – Exterior	A deficiency exists if the exterior wall covering has missing sections of at least 1 sq foot per wall; peeling paint of 10 sq ft or more (see Lead Based Paint Hazard if house was pre-1978); or exterior wall component(s) are not functionally adequate.	Checked for being sound and free from hazardous defects; did not give specific measurements.
Wall – Interior	A deficiency exists if not functionally adequate or if there is a hole greater than 2 inches in diameter or there is an accumulation of holes that are cumulatively greater than 6 inches by 6 inches.	Checked for being sound and free from hazardous defects; did not give specific measurements.
Water Heater	A deficiency exists if the TPR valve is not functioning properly; if there is no hot water; if the relief valve discharge piping is missing or terminates greater than 6 inches or less than 2 inches from waste receptor flood-level; if the chimney or flue piping is blocked, misaligned, or missing; or if gas shutoff valve is damaged, missing, or not installed.	Checked to be located, equipped, and installed in safe manner.
Window	<p>If designed to be able to open/close, must function as such. If hardware is/was present indicating that it should, must function appropriately. Screens are not required unless evidence of previous installation or window designed to have a screen.</p> <p>NSPIRE does not recognize windows as an official form of egress, not specifically so if a window is painted or nailed shut and inspector does not deem it as a window that’s intended to open/close, it would not fail for this.</p>	Checked for windows and doors that are accessible from the outside are lockable; asks if there is at least one window and to ensure all windows are free of signs of severe deterioration or missing or broken out panes. Did not allow for painted shut or nailed shut windows as windows were form of egress.