



**Housing Authority
City of Pittsburgh**

TENANT GUIDE TO NSPIRE

Informational Workshop

Aug. 27, 2025

www.HACP.org



A person wearing a white hard hat and safety glasses is shown in profile, looking down at a clipboard they are holding. They are holding a pen in their right hand, ready to write. The background shows a building with large windows. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

Introducing NSPIRE

**National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate
to Replace Housing Quality Standards**

HQS

Housing Quality Standards

- **Location Focus**
 - HQS focus is to ensure rental properties in Housing Choice Voucher Program and Low Income Housing Programs are identified as decent, safe, and sanitary
- **Inspection Locations**
 - Living room, kitchen, bathroom, other rooms used for living
 - All secondary heating and plumbing
- **Deficiency Types**
 - Health and safety
 - Non-health and safety



NSPIRE

National Standards for
the Physical Inspection of
Real Estate

- **Resident Focus**
 - Designed to focus on resident health and safety
 - Addresses the increase in multi-family properties and tenant and project-based vouchers
- **3 Inspection Areas**
 - Inspectable Areas
 - Outside
 - Inside
 - Unit
- **3 Deficiency Categories**
 - Condition and appearance, function and operability, health and safety
 - Rationales: Deficiencies based on clear and concise explanations of potential risk a defect presents



Goals of NSPIRE

- Improve Resident Health and Safety
- Strengthen Physical Standards
- Enhance Inspection Efficiency
- Promote Year-Round Maintenance
- Consolidate the housing standards and inspection processes to ensure HUD-assisted properties are safe, habitable, and well-maintained for all residents
- Align all forms of housing programs under one set of standards
 - Used for **Housing Choice Voucher** (HCV), **Project-Based Voucher** (PBV), multi-family, **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit** (LIHTC), **HOME**, **Rural Development**, and **Low-Income Public Housing** (LIPH)
 - Implement inspections that better reflect the true physical conditions of the property
 - Streamline protocol to focus on welfare of resident
 - Prioritize health, safety, and functional defects over appearance





KEY CHANGES FOR TENANTS

How NSPIRE Will Impact Housing Choice Voucher Holders

1. Key Changes

- Health & Safety First

NSPIRE prioritizes deficiencies that directly impact residents' health and safety.

Examples: Mold, pests, broken smoke detectors, exposed wiring, and non-working plumbing.

2. **Key Changes** Resident Units Are Always Inspected

NSPIRE ensures that occupied units will be inspected at least once a year. This includes common areas. This means tenants' homes will be more directly evaluated for overall compliance.

3. **Key Changes** Stronger Standards for Habitability

New "life-threatening" and "severe" categories of deficiencies mean quicker repair timelines for serious issues.

Housing providers must fix life-threatening issues within 24 hours.

4. Key Changes

Clearer Inspection Criteria

NSPIRE uses simplified, transparent scoring and standards.

Tenants should be able to understand what conditions are required and when violations must be fixed.

5. **Key Changes**

Tenant Feedback Matters

While not required, HUD encourages tenant engagement and reporting of conditions.

Tenants can report unsafe conditions directly to HACP if they are not resolved in time.

A person wearing a white hard hat and a safety vest is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the left. They are holding a clipboard and a pen, appearing to be taking notes. The background is a blurred view of a building with large windows. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

INSPECTIONS

NSPIRE Protocols



NSPIRE “Threes”

3 Inspectable Areas

- Outside: Building site, building exterior components, and any building systems located outside of the building or unit
- Inside: Common areas and building systems that can generally be found within the building interior and are not inside a unit
- Unit: Interior components of an individual unit

NSPIRE “Threes”

3 Categories of Deficiencies

Low, *Moderate*, and *Severe* — with several of the *Severe* also being *Life Threatening*. Each category will ideally require certain timeframes for repair:

- Low — Minor issues with little or no impact on safety or living conditions.
- PASS: No repairs required or PASS w/comment
- Moderate — Affects the habitability or the quality of the living environment but doesn't pose an immediate danger to health or safety.
 - FAIL: Repairs in 30 days.
- *Severe* - Poses a high risk of permanent disability, serious injury or illness that compromises the physical security or safety of a resident
 - FAIL: 24 Hour Repair



NSPIRE “Threes”

3 Categories of Deficiencies

Low, Moderate, and Severe — with several of the *Severe* also being *Life Threatening*. Each category will ideally require certain timeframes for repair:

- Life Threatening — Deficiencies that, if evident in the home or on the property, present a high risk of death to a resident.
 - FAIL: Repairs in 24 hours.



Prior To Inspections

Before the Inspector Arrives

1. Know your inspection date
2. Be present if possible
3. Do a quick clean-up and walkthrough
4. Report any problems in writing to management before and after the inspection



Outside Deficiencies



Above/Right: Foundation is spalling, flaking, or chipping.



Above: Broken sidewalk/walkway.

Outside Deficiencies



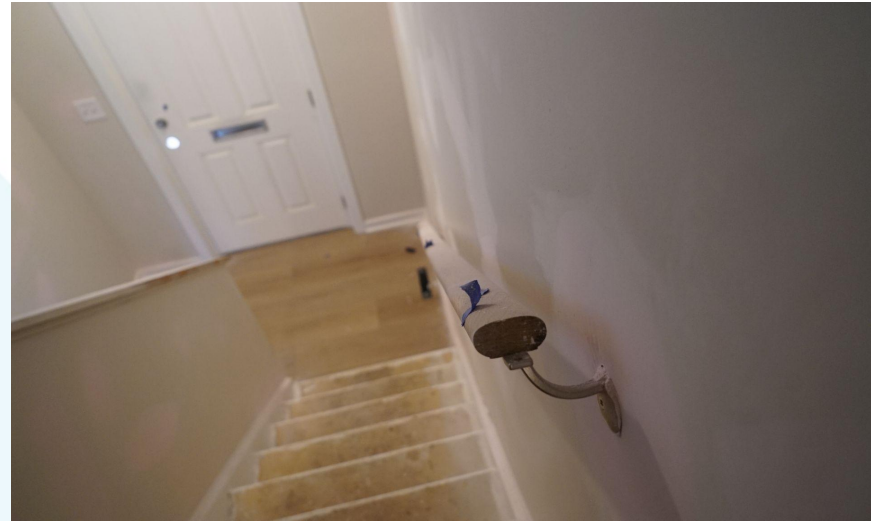
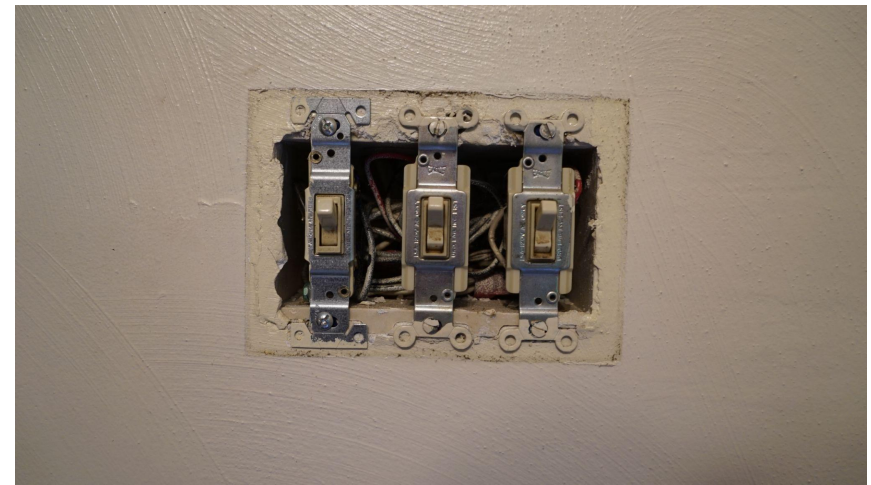
Above/Right: Trash piled up, chipped window pane/frame

Above/Left: Broken porch, damaged entryway

Inside Deficiencies



Above: Damaged light fixture pulled away from the ceiling



Top: Missing outlet cover

Bottom: Damaged or peeling banister, stairs

Inside Deficiencies



Left: Door is not attached to wall.



Above: Storage component is damaged, inoperable, or missing.



TENANT DAMAGES

What Tenants May Be Responsible for Under NSPIRE

TENANT DAMAGES

Under HUD's NSPIRE, tenants can be held responsible for damages they cause — especially when the damage is due to neglect, abuse, or intentional behavior.

However, the housing provider (landlord or property management) is still responsible for maintaining the unit and fixing general wear-and-tear issues.



Tenant Damages

Intentional or Negligent Damage

- Punching holes in walls
- Breaking windows or doors
- Damaging appliances through misuse
- Tampering with smoke or CO detectors
- Disconnecting electrical systems or plumbing
- Graffiti or defacing property
- Litter/Garbage



Tenant Damages

Fire or Water Damage

- Leaving the stove or oven unattended causing a fire
- Overflowing a bathtub or sink
- Blocking ventilation
- Smoking in a non-smoking unit and causing smoke damage



Tenant Damages

Pest Infestations Caused by Unsanitary Conditions

If a pest issue (like roaches or rodents) is caused by unclean or unsanitary living conditions, the tenant may be held partially responsible.



Tenant Damages

Obstruction or Tampering with Safety Systems

- Removing or covering smoke detectors
- Blocking fire exits
- Disabling carbon monoxide detectors



Tenant Damages

Lost or Damaged Locks/Keys

- Replacing lost keys
- Paying for lock changes due to tenant-related issues



A person wearing a white hard hat and safety glasses is shown from the side, holding a clipboard and writing with a pen. The entire image has a blue tint. The background shows a building with large windows.

HUD/NSPIRE GUIDANCE

For Tenants



Under **NSPIRE** HUD Emphasizes

- The property owner/manager is responsible for maintaining units in good repair —regardless of who caused the issue. They are not responsible for repairing tenant damages
- Tenants may be billed or held accountable for damages they caused, but landlords cannot use that as an excuse to delay repairs.
- If repairs are needed, they must still be made promptly, and disputes over responsibility can be settled separately.

Important Tips for Tenants

If you're blamed for damage you did not cause:

1. Document your unit's condition (photos/videos).
2. Submit a written response to the property manager.
3. Contact HACP if repairs are delayed unfairly.





For more information on NSPIRE, visit:
<https://hud.gov/reac/nspire>

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