

HACSB

Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara

NSPIRE LANDLORD GUIDE

Key Information for Section 8 Owners and Property Managers

1 NSPIRE PROTOCOL
THREE INSPECTABLE AREAS

Under NSPIRE, inspectors evaluate three main areas of a property:

Unit

The interior of the resident's rental unit, including kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, living areas, smoke alarms, electrical outlets, plumbing, heating, and windows.

Inside

Interior common areas of the building outside the rental unit, such as hallways, stairwells, shared laundry rooms, community rooms, and other shared spaces.

Outside

The exterior of the building and surrounding property, including roofs, exterior walls, walkways, stairs, railings, parking areas, and outdoor common areas.

2 DEFICIENCY CATEGORIES AND REPAIR DEADLINES

Under NSPIRE, deficiencies are classified by their level of health and safety risk.

Severity Level	Correction Timeframe	Inspection Result
Life-Threatening	**Within 24 hours of notification**	**Fail**
Severe	**Within 30 calendar days of notification**	**Fail**
Moderate	**Within 30 calendar days of notification**	**Fail**
Low	**No correction required for HCV/PBV inspection compliance**	**Pass**

3 EXAMPLES OF LIFE-THREATENING DEFICIENCIES

The examples below are not a complete list. Life-threatening deficiencies are determined by HUD's standards and the specific hazard.

- Any required smoke alarm that is missing, not working, or improperly installed under HUD standards.
- Gas or fuel leaks and other conditions presenting an immediate fire or explosion hazard.
- Exposed electrical wiring in outlets, switches, or light fixtures, or other electrical hazards that pose an immediate danger.
- Blocked or unusable required emergency exit routes, including certain obstructed egress doors or windows.
- Severe structural hazards presenting an imminent risk of collapse or serious injury.
- Other serious fire, carbon monoxide, or safety hazards classified as life-threatening under HUD standards.
- Loss of essential utilities, such as electricity, water, or heating, when the condition creates an immediate threat to resident health or safety.

If you discover a condition presenting immediate danger, take appropriate emergency action, including contacting emergency services or the utility provider when necessary. Do not wait for an inspection notice to respond to an urgent hazard.



4 SMOKE ALARMS

IMPORTANT NEW INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Under **NSPIRE**, smoke alarms must be **hardwired** or have a sealed, builtt-in 10-year battery, unless an applicable exception applies, Smoke alarms must be properly installed and working in the following locations:

- Inside every bedroom or sleeping room.
- Outside each bedroom or sleeping room, within 21 feet of the bedroom door. A single smoke alarm installed in the hallway near multiple bedrooms can meet this requirement if it is within 21 feet of each bedroom door.
- On every level of the home, including basements, where applicable.

Missing or nonworking required smoke alarms are life-threatening deficiencies that must be corrected within 24 hours.

Test all smoke alarms and replace any missing or defective alarms before inspection.

5 EMERGENCY EXITS AND EGRESS

Under **NSPIRE**, residents must be able to safely exit their home during an emergency. The following requirements apply:

- **Emergency Windows:** At least one window in each sleeping room must be accessible, unobstructed, and able to open for emergency escape, when required.
- **Exit Doors:** Must open properly and allow residents to exit without using a key, tool, or special knowledge.
- **Exit Pathways:** Must be clear of furniture, clutter, or other items that could block escape.
- **Security Bars or Locks:** Must not prevent residents from escaping during an emergency.

Blocked or inaccessible required emergency exits are life-threatening deficiencies that must be corrected within 24 hours.

Ensure all required exits are functional and free of dbstructions before an inspection and coordinate with residents to address any issues.

6 HOUSEKEEPING AND CLUTTER

Under NSPIRE, inspectors are not permitted to cite general cleanliness or clutter as a standalone violation. However, housekeeping conditions that create health or safety hazards may result in a failed inspection. Examples include:

- **Blocked exits:** Furniture or clutter preventing safe emergency escape.
- **Fire hazards:** Excessive accumulation of combustible materials near heaters or other heat sources.
- **Pest infestations:** Conditions involving rodents, cockroaches, or other pests.
- **Unsanitary conditions:** Accumulated garbage, mildew-like substances on surfaces, sewage, or waste that creates a health hazard.
- **Blocked access:** Items preventing safe access to required equipment or building features.

7 PREPARING FOR INSPECTIONS AND PREVENTING FAILURES

- Conduct routine walk-throughs for potential hazards.
- Set clear expectations in your lease and communicate with residents.
- Encourage resident cooperation and prompt reporting of repairs.
- Inspect essential systems (smoke/CO alarms, exits, electrical, plumbing, heating, etc.).
- Address repairs promptly and keep common areas and exits clear.
- Submit proof of corrections when permitted to inspections@hacsb.org by the required deadline (some deficiencies may require a a physical reinspection).

8 HUD RESOURCES, TRAINING, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK

HUD maintains official resources that owners and management staff may review at no cost:

- NSPIRE home page: hud.gov/reac/nspire
- NSPIRE standards: hud.gov/reac/nspire-standards
- Inspectable areas: hud.gov/reac/nspire-inspectable-areas
- How to read the standards: hud.gov/reac/nspire-reading-standards
- Official notices: hud.gov/reac/nspire-notices
- HUD life-threatening (LT) deficiency list (PIH 2026-18)
- NSPIRE Checklist: hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/NSPIRE-HCV-Checklist.pdf
- NSPIRE terms and definitions: hud.gov/reac/nspire-terms
- Questions and feedback: NSPIRE@hud.gov

HUD may update technical guidance and published standards. Landlords are encouraged to use the current versions of these resources and contact HACSB if they need clarification about local procedures, correction deadlines, or documentation requirements.