Navy Housing

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Navy Housing Inspection Criteria for Community Housing

It is the responsibility of the Housing Service Center (HSC) to ensure all community housing meet this Inspection Criteria.

The following standards are based on basic health and safety concerns and do not require advanced technical expertise or training although some basic foundational training may be required dependent upon an individual's background and experience. A few basic tools will be required such as a tape measure, flashlight and outlet tester. Total time for an inspection of most rental properties should not exceed 20 minutes.

This document encompasses basic health and safety items and are required for the benefit of the HSC customers. No exceptions will be made to these standards. The Navy Housing Inspection Checklist is provided and follows the same category groupings used below.

A. Electrical

Inspections do not require the skills of an electrician. Most of the components can be verified by a visual inspection and/or observation. Some components will require easy-to-read equipment (such as the outlet tester) or actual testing of the electrical device by depressing a test button on items such as Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) circuits and smoke detectors.

1. All receptacles in the home must be properly wired. This can be checked by inserting an outlet tester into the receptacle. The outlet tester will indicate if the receptacle is properly wired. If not wired correctly, the outlet tester will indicate the nature of the problem. One example would be an open ground. It is not up to the Inspector to determine the cause of the problem, only that there is a problem. The Property Manager is responsible for determining the cause of the problem and taking corrective action.

2. All switches and receptacles will be visually inspected to ensure they are intact and undamaged. Covers will be in place to prevent children from sticking their fingers into open outlet boxes. Switches and receptacles will be free of cracks and/or broken pieces.

3. Any outlet within 6 feet of a water source must have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) protection against shock. GFCI protection may be in the form of a GFCI receptacle (has the red breaker switch on the outlet) or a GFCI circuit breaker on the main electrical service panel. Either form of GFCI has a test button that should be depressed by the inspector to see if the circuit trips. Another option is to use a GFCI outlet tester that can be plugged into the receptacle to determine if it is properly wired.

4. All smoke alarms must be in the proper locations and in good working order. The inspector will depress the test button to ensure the alarm is working. Smoke alarms are required in all sleeping rooms:

   - Outside of each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the sleeping rooms
   - On each level of the dwelling unit including the basement

   Smoke alarms are **not** recommended for kitchens.

5. Carbon Monoxide detectors will be installed in dwelling units that have attached garages that are not otherwise ventilated or units that have fuel-burning (non-electrical) appliances. They will be located outside the sleeping areas and on each level of the dwelling unit including basements.

6. Circuit breaker panels (also called electrical service panels) must be accessible inside the dwelling unit with each circuit clearly marked.

7. Light fixtures in living areas (excluding closets and storage areas) must operate from a switch and have a working bulb in each socket. A non-working bulb could simply be burned out or could indicate a non-operational socket or an electrical short. The switch must not emit any buzzing sounds or arcing which could indicate a possible short.

B. Plumbing

This component primarily requires visual inspection and simple testing of plumbing fixtures.

1. All toilets must flush properly which includes evacuation of water from the bowl without blockages as well as refilling the tank. There may be no leaks from the tank, water supply line or at the base of the toilet.

2. All sinks, lavatories, tubs and showers will have both hot and cold water. Turn on the hot water tap and let it run until the water heats up.

3. Turn on all faucets to medium force to determine if fixtures drain properly. Slow or backed-up drains are not acceptable.

4. All water heaters (excludes tankless water heaters) must have a pressure relief valve. There must be a discharge line (usually consisting of PVC pipe) extending from the pressure relief valve to within six inches of the floor. If water heater is located in a garage it must be at least 18 inches above floor level and be protected from car collision damage by a pipe bollard or some other type of collision prevention device.

   While in the mechanical room during air conditioning season, check the condensate line/drain pan to ensure no blockage exists that may cause water damage inside the dwelling unit.

5. Lavatories and sinks must have functioning stoppers. This can be either a mechanical stopper as part of the faucet or a detached plug/stopper.

6. All wet areas of the dwelling unit (bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms or any other room with a domestic water source) shall be inspected for leaks from water supply and drain lines. Leaking water can lead to structural damage, mold, etc.

7. Bathrooms must be ventilated to dissipate moisture and reduce mold issues. Ventilation can be either a window (window must be operational, meaning it can be opened) or a ventilation/exhaust fan. Inspect the water heater to ensure it is installed on a solid, level surface.

8. A master water shutoff valve for the dwelling unit will be clearly marked and easily accessible. Note: this requirement can vary in different parts of the country depending on construction practices. An acceptable alternative may be to have individual shutoff valves at each plumbing fixture.

C. HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning)

In most cases this component requires the inspector to verify the item is operational. Depending on the time of year the inspection is conducted, it may not be possible to verify operation. As an example, in January in the northern US, it may not be possible to determine proper operation of the air conditioner. In this case, the inspector would check N/A on the Inspection Checklist and annotate that it could not be checked.

1. All non-electric space heaters must be vented to the exterior of the dwelling unit. Space heaters may be fueled by natural gas, oil, propane or kerosene. Unvented space heaters using these fuels can cause carbon monoxide accumulation in the dwelling unit resulting in carbon monoxide poisoning. In older homes the inspector may find an unvented natural gas space heater connected to a gas line. Although it may not be turned on at the time of the inspection, it will be disconnected by the owner/property manager and removed from the dwelling unit.

2. If the dwelling unit has air conditioning, the inspection will ascertain that the unit works but will not be able to determine how efficiently it works. The unit will be turned on at the start of the inspection to determine if cool air is produced. Air temperature can be checked with an infrared temperature sensor (point and pull the trigger).

3. The furnace must raise the temperature inside the dwelling unit. The inspection will ascertain that the unit works but will not be able to determine how efficiently it works. The unit will be turned on at the start of the inspection to determine if the unit produces warm air. Air temperature can be checked with an infrared temperature sensor (point and pull the trigger).

4. Ceiling fans are not required but, if they are present in the dwelling unit, they must be operational. Turn fan on using either a wall switch (if one exists) or the pull chain on the fan itself.

   Whole house or attic fans are not required but if they are present in the dwelling unit, they must be operational. Turn the fan switch on to determine if it is operational.

D. Appliances

Appliances will be operational, in a good state of repair and clean. The inspection is visual and requires turning on the appliance controls. No testing equipment is required.

1. Kitchen range and oven are operational. All burners on the cooktop work when dial is in the on position. All oven heating elements and lights are operational. Pilot light on gas ovens work properly. Anti-tip brackets are installed to prevent the range from tipping forward when the oven door is open. The reason for the anti-tipping requirement is when the oven door is open, a child could sit or stand on the open door causing the oven to tip forward spilling anything cooking on the stove to fall onto the child. Additionally, the appliance will be free of grease to prevent fires as well as for sanitary reasons. Oven door seals will be pliant and intact.

2. Microwave ovens (when present) will operate correctly and have no missing parts or damage that could result in radiation leaks.

3. Refrigerators and freezers must be clean, mold free, operational and in a good state of repair. There will be no missing parts such as crisper drawers. Refrigerator freezer compartments must have either ice makers or ice cube trays. All lights must work and all door gaskets must be pliant and intact.

4. Dishwashers (when present) are operational and are tested by starting a wash cycle to ensure water supply is connected. Visually check the door gasket to make sure it seals properly and does not allow water to leak during operation. There must be no mold or mildew present.

5. Garbage disposals (when present) must be operational when turned on at the switch. The rubber sink gasket that leads into the disposal unit must be free of mold and mildew.

6. The dwelling unit must have washer and dryer connections or have accessibility to laundry facilities in close proximity and located on the premises; when washers and dryers are provided they must be operational and in a good state of repair. Washers will be visually inspected for mold, proper door gaskets to prevent leaks and verification that water does flow into the machine as required. Dryers will be checked to ensure they are vented and that there is no buildup of lint either in the lint filters or in the exhaust vent since such a buildup could cause a fire.

7. Range hoods may be vented or unvented and will be inspected to determine if they operate properly. Turn the light switch and fan motor switch on to test. Ensure that the range hood fan filter is in place and is the correct size. The unit will be clean and free of grease.

E. Environmental

1. This component is a visual inspection looking for potential environmental hazards. Should mold be observed or if there are indications that lead the inspector to believe mold might exist out of sight such as inside a wall, the property owner will be required to arrange a professional inspection to: 1) determine if mold exists; 2) outline necessary steps to mitigate the problem; or 3) provide documentation that no mold exists.

   Check all areas of the home for any visible signs of mold. An inspector might expect to find mold only in wet areas but it is possible to find mold migrating from wet areas to non-wet areas due to seepage under sill plates, floor coverings, etc.

2. In homes built prior to 1978 one can expect to find lead paint. In many instances it has already been encapsulated. However, any building component in an older home that is a friction point can produce lead paint dust which is extremely toxic to children and can cause serious brain damage. One example would be the window sash that moves up and down when the window is opened and closed. The inspector will use lead wipes in the window sill or on the window stool to determine if lead dust is present and therefore a hazard to children. The resident will be made aware that lead dust may be present.

3. Conduct a visual inspection for signs of water intrusion from the exterior of the dwelling unit to the inside. One example would be water stains on the ceiling that might indicate a roof leak. Water stains below a window could indicate a window leak. Long-term leakage can cause wood to rot, sheetrock deterioration, a damp environment that can cause an increase of insects and propagation of mold.

4. Conduct a visual inspection of interior areas such as basements where pipe leakage could occur. This would include areas other than the wet areas described under the plumbing section. Any dampness can result in structural weakening or mold growth.

5. Conduct a visual inspection of drawers, cabinets and baseboards for signs of rodents, insects or other pests. Evidence includes animal feces, eggs or dead pests. Mouse droppings can be a source of Hanta Virus and will be thoroughly cleaned up before a tenant moves into the unit.

F. Security and Egress

Security requirements improve the physical safety of residents and will provide peace of mind for customers whose spouses are frequently absent due to mission requirements.

Egress is an important consideration for any dwelling unit. In case of emergency, all residents must be able to evacuate the premises immediately and safely. Egress requirements are identified for primary means of escape and secondary means of escape. Primary means of escape shall be a door, stairway or ramp providing a means of unobstructed travel from the dwelling unit at street or finished ground level. Secondary means of escape are windows in living areas. Each sleeping room must have at least one form of egress. HSC inspectors will be thoroughly familiar with egress requirements. The following requirements pertain to secondary egress.

1. Deadbolts **will not be double-keyed**. The deadbolt must have a thumb latch for locking and unlocking on the inside of the door. In case of an emergency residents (especially children) may not be able to locate the key for a double keyed deadbolt making escape difficult if not impossible.

2. Sliding patio doors must have two locks, both of which are operational. Normally there is the primary lock that comes from the manufacturer as part of the door assembly. The second lock may be a wooden rod/dowel that sits on the tracks, preventing the door from sliding open from the outside. It could also be a thumb screw lock that attaches to the track and prevents the door from sliding open. **No keyed lock may be used** on the door track because residents (especially children) may not be able to locate the key for a double keyed deadbolt making escape difficult if not impossible.

3. All bedrooms (if there is no exterior door opening out from the dwelling unit to a balcony or patio) must have at least one window on an outside wall that meets local minimum egress requirements. Windows must open without special tools, keys or special efforts. Windows must provide a clear opening meeting local requirements or not less than 5.7 SF. Clear openings must meet local requirements or not be less than 20 inches wide nor 24 inches high. The bottom of the clear opening must meet local requirements or not be more than 44 inches above the floor.

Window egress must meet local requirements or not be within 20 feet of the finished ground level. Most two-story homes will meet this requirement. A three-story home would likely not meet the requirement. If the distance is greater than local requirements or 20 feet, the room may not be used as a bedroom unless a fire escape system available.

Windows in living areas having a sill height below finished ground level must still meet the requirement for a clear opening plus they must have a window well meeting the following requirements:

- Dimensions of the window well must allow the window to be fully opened.
- The window well shall have a net clear opening meeting local requirements or not less than 9 SF.
- The length and width of the window well must meet local requirements or not be less than 36 inches.
- Window wells must meet local requirements or be not less than 44 inches, they must be equipped with a permanently affixed ladder or with steps that allow residents to reach ground level. Ladder or steps cannot encroach on the minimum clearance requirements of the window well.

4. The minimum width of interior stairs and hallways in interior living areas must meet local egress requirements.

5. The minimum width of interior doors must meet local egress requirements.

6. Window latches/locks must be in good working order. There can be no loose or missing screws or hardware. Keyed locks **will not** be used on windows because of egress concerns during an emergency. Residents (especially children) may not be able to locate the key for a keyed window lock making escape during an emergency difficult if not impossible.

G. Exterior

A quick walk around the dwelling unit doing a visual inspection of the exterior of the house will be sufficient to obtain an idea of problems that may be found. The inspector is also able to obtain a feel for potential security issues that may require a closer look once inside the dwelling unit.

1. Inspect the roof to see if it is intact. This is a visual inspection from the ground and does not require climbing on the roof. There must be no missing or damaged shingles; no missing gutters nor damaged facia and soffits; and no tree limbs lying on the roof or brushing the roof when the wind blows. Flashings will be in a good state of repair.

2. All siding will be undamaged and intact. Paint will be in good condition. Siding will be free of mold, mildew, moss or vines which might harbor pests.

3. No cracks or holes will be visible in the foundation of the dwelling unit and it will be structurally sound based on this visual inspection. Windows in the foundation walls will be caulked with no apparent gaps.

4. All windows will be operational and have screens that are in a good state of repair for purposes of the resident gaining ventilation through windows without letting bugs into the dwelling unit. A hole in screens no larger than ½ inch in diameter may be acceptably repaired (patched) with screen patches. Screens with holes larger than ½ inch in diameter must be replaced.

5. House numbers will be placed on the street-side of the dwelling unit and be easily visible from the street. This feature makes it easier for emergency vehicles to find the property.