



To: Real Estate Department Partners
From: Real Estate Department
Date: June 6, 2025- **UPDATED August 6, 2026**
Re: **NSPIRE Frequently Asked Questions**

Notice: **RED-26-36**

IHCDA is providing this FAQ regarding the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (“NSPIRE”) inspection standards based on recent questions and inspection results. This FAQ will be updated as needed with additional guidance. **New language for this update are in red font.**

[IHCDA's compliance webpage](#) contains various NSPIRE resources including training materials, the NSPIRE Final Rule, and the NSPIRE standards. Information on NSPIRE affirmative habitability requirements is also included in the compliance manuals.

Questions about IHCDA's inspection process or specific inspection results can be directed to Chris Rivera, Real Estate Inspector, via crivera@ihcda.in.gov. Questions about IHCDA's NSPIRE implementation plan and policies can be directed to Matt Rayburn, Deputy Executive Director & Chief Real Estate Development Officer, via mrayburn@ihcda.in.gov.

NSPIRE APPLICABILITY

Question #1: What inspection standard will IHCDA use when inspecting a property?

Answer #1: IHCDA will use the NSPIRE standards for all inspections. For tax credit inspections, IHCDA will ensure that any additional QAP requirements have also been met based on the QAP that the project was funded under. QAP requirements that are stricter than or in addition to NSPIRE standards must be followed where applicable.

Question #2: My property was funded and/or placed-in-service before NSPIRE. Am I grandfathered into the old Uniform Physical Conditions Standards (UPCS)?

Answer #2: No. NSPIRE standards apply retroactively to all projects regardless of the year of allocation or placed-in-service. IHCDA implemented NSPIRE effective January 1, 2024 for all construction progress and ongoing compliance inspections for programs that previously used the UPCS inspection standard.

EGRESS REQUIREMENTS

Question #1: How will an IHCDA inspector write up issues related to blocked egress, specifically when obstruction is caused by resident-owned property?

Answer #1: IHCDA will apply the NSPIRE egress standard as follows.



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- In a unit- if an egress door is blocked by resident-owned property, the inspector will write up as a life-threatening safety issue under Deficiency #1
- In a unit- if a window is blocked by resident-owned property, the inspector will not write up as obstruction
- In a unit- if access to a fire escape is blocked by resident-owned property, the inspector will not write up as an obstruction
- Interior (non-unit)- if doors are blocked by anything, the inspector will write up as a life-threatening safety issue under Deficiency #1
- Exterior- if an item on the outside is blocking access to a fire escape, the inspector will write up as a life-threatening safety issue under Deficiency #1

[See the NSPIRE Egress standard V3.0 for additional information.](#)

GFCI REQUIREMENTS

Question #1: Is a washing machine's water connection considered a water source for purposes of the NSPIRE GFCI rules?

Answer #1: Yes. Therefore, all outlets within six feet of the washing machine connection must be GFCI protected.

Question #2: The NSPIRE GFCI standard includes an exception for an outlet that is dedicated to a major appliance. What is a dedicated outlet?

Answer #2: A dedicated outlet must be single outlet dedicated to an appliance that "is only capable of serving that specific appliance." A dedicated outlet cannot be a dual/duplex outlet. See the [NSPIRE Electrical- GFCI/AFCI Outlet or Breaker standard V3.0](#) for additional information.

Question #3: If the open water source is a sink, how is the measurement made to determine if the sink is within six feet of an outlet?

Answer #3: Distance is measured from the center of the sink.

SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY (SRO) UNITS

Question #1: Do the NSPIRE affirmative habitability requirements for units related to kitchens and bathrooms apply to Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units?

Answer #1: If an SRO unit includes a kitchen in the unit, then the kitchen affirmative habitability requirements apply. If an SRO unit has a bathroom in the unit, then the bathroom affirmative habitability requirements apply. If a kitchen and/or bathroom is not included in the SRO unit, then those affirmative habitability requirements are not applicable to the unit. Note: The unit must have been approved as an SRO by IHCD and if a kitchen and/or bathroom was originally included in the unit those facilities must be maintained in a manner that complies with NSPIRE.

SMOKE ALARM REQUIREMENTS

Question #1: The NSPIRE smoke alarm standard states that a smoke alarm "should be installed at least 10 feet from a cooking appliance" and "should not be installed near windows,

doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.” Will an IHODA inspector write this up as an issue during an inspection?

Answer #1: No. It is IHODA’s understanding that HUD has determined these are best practice recommendations, not strict requirements. IHODA recommends that owner agents comply with these standards to maximize safety and ensure proper functionality of smoke alarms. However, IHODA will not inspect for compliance with these recommendations.

Question #2: The NSPIRE smoke alarm standard for inside areas (Deficiency #1- Inside) states that a smoke alarm must be installed “inside each classroom,” “outside the classrooms,” and “on each level.” For NSPIRE purposes, what is a “classroom?”

Answer #2: For purposes of the NSPIRE smoke alarm standard, a “classroom” is any common area within closed doors within a residential building- i.e., an interior, enclosed room that is not an individual residential dwelling unit. Smoke alarms must be installed in each classroom and at least one smoke alarm must be installed within the common hallways of each level of the building. Non-residential buildings are not inspectable areas under NSPIRE standards.

WATER HEATER REQUIREMENTS (CLARIFIED 8/6/2026)

Question #1: Please clarify the NSPIRE requirement for relief valve discharge piping for water heaters.

Answer #1: The NSPIRE standard notes it is a deficiency if a relief valve discharge piping “terminates greater than 6 inches or less than 2 inches from waste receptor flood-level.” Therefore, there should be an air gap of at least 2” but no more than 6” above the lip of the floor drain or any other type of drain **such as a drain pan or hub drain**. See the [NSPIRE Water Heaters standard V3.0](#) for additional information.

WINDOW REQUIREMENTS (ADDED 8/6/2026)

Question #1: Does a requirement to maintain historic windows (as imposed by historic review requirements, funder requirements, etc.) supersede the NSPIRE standards related to windows?

Answer #1: No. Windows must still meet the NSPIRE window standards for function and safety. Windows must open, close, be able to be secured, and have all required components per the NSPIRE standards, as applicable. See the [NSPIRE Window standard V3.0](#).

WINDOW SCREEN REQUIREMENTS

Question #1: NSPIRE standards state that if a window screen is present it must be free of defects- i.e., it is a deficiency if there are holes/tears/cuts in the screen. Is it a deficiency if there is no screen present at all?

Answer #1: Screens are treated as a required window component if the window was designed to have a screen. If the window has a screen track/frame/channel or other clear indicator that it is meant to be a screened window, then the screen is considered part of the window’s components and must be in place and free of defects. If the screen is not present, the inspector will write up a deficiency for a “missing window component.”