

NSPIRE Pre-Inspection Punch List

To prepare for an NSPIRE inspection, use this Pre-Inspection Punch List, which condenses the NSPIRE requirements into actionable tasks for a quick walkthrough.

Critical Life and Safety (Immediate Priority)

- Smoke Alarms:** Test alarms in every bedroom and hallway; ensure they are hard-wired or have 10-year sealed batteries. (Alarms must be installed on each level of the unit AND within 15–21 feet of each sleeping area.)
- Carbon Monoxide Alarms:** Verify functioning alarms are within 15 feet of all sleeping rooms and fuel-burning sources.
- Fire Extinguishers:** Check that tags are not expired and gauges show proper charged. (Fire extinguishers must be undamaged.)
- Exits:** Remove any furniture or debris blocking interior or exterior exit paths. (Exit signs must be illuminated and visible.)
- Sprinklers:** Ensure no paint or dust is covering sprinkler heads. (Sprinkler systems must be unobstructed and free of damage.)
- Fire-Labeled Doors:** Ensure all fire-rated doors (including the unit entry door, if applicable) self-close and latch completely into the frame.
- Trash Chutes:** Verify that the trash chute is free of blockages and the door opens correctly and self-closes.
- Call-for-Aid Systems:** If an emergency pull-cord system is present, test it for functionality and ensure the cord hangs no less than 6 inches from the floor.

Interior Health and Safety

- Windows:** Confirm all first-floor and fire-escape windows have working locks. Ensure windows open and close properly.
- Sanitation:** Ensure the unit is clean, free of trash, and shows no signs of pests or mold-like substances.
- Paint (Pre-1978 Units):** Inspect all surfaces (windows, trim, walls) for any chipping or peeling paint if children under 6 reside in the unit.
- Doors:** Test that entry doors lock and unlock properly, and fire-labeled doors self-close and latch.

Plumbing and Mechanical

- Electrical:** Use a tester to ensure all 3-prong outlets are grounded and GFCI outlets outside or within 6 feet of water sources trip correctly.
- HVAC:** Turn on the heat to ensure it reaches all living spaces; check the air conditioning functionality, if present.
- Water:** Verify the hot water tank has a proper discharge pipe and pressure release valve.
- Toilets and Sinks:** Check for secure mounting (no wobbling), and ensure there are no active leaks or drainage clogs.

Structure and Appliances

- Surfaces:** Patch any large holes in walls and ceilings and secure any loose flooring that creates a trip hazard.
- Kitchen:** Confirm the cooking appliance works and has all knobs. Ensure the refrigerator is clean and cooling to the correct temperature.
- Lighting:** Verify the kitchen and bathrooms each have a permanent light fixture.

Exterior

- Stairways:** Ensure handrails are present for stairs with 4+ steps and are sturdy with no movement.
- Walking Surfaces:** Check sidewalks and driveways for potholes or ponding water.
- Gutters and Roof:** Confirm gutters are attached and the roof appears weather-tight from the ground.
- Signage:** Ensure the building or unit address is clearly visible from the street.

Disclaimer: This checklist is only a guide. Other items not listed may cause a unit to fail an NSPIRE inspection. Common areas in multi-unit properties are the responsibility of the Property Owner/Manager; these areas must also be inspected. In addition, all state, city, and county codes must be followed.