



EXISTING HOME COMPONENT INSPECTION GUIDE

Single Family, 502, 504, and HPG Housing Inspections

* This form is an optional supplement until inspectors become familiar with expected standards. *

A. Rural Development Regulations Define An Acceptable Existing Dwelling As:

1. Be structurally sound, functionally adequate, in good repair or placed in good repair with loan funds, (Handbook-1-3550, Section 2 Defective construction, poor workmanship, deteriorating conditions, evidence of continuing settlement, excessive dampness, leakage, decay, termites, or other conditions impairing the safety, sanitation or structural soundness of the dwelling shall render the property unacceptable until the defects or conditions have been remedied and the probability of further damage eliminated (HUD 4905.1, 2-8).
2. Be consistent with program objectives to provide only housing that are modest in size, design and cost. (Handbook-1-3550, 5.6)
3. Provide decent, safe and sanitary living conditions when improvements are completed (Handbook-1-3550, 5.7)
4. Must meet the thermal requirements of RD Instruction 1924-A, Exhibit D, for additions to existing houses.

B. Existing House Inspection in General Terms:

1. Hazard Free: The property must be free of hazards which may adversely affect the health and safety of the occupants or the structural soundness of the improvements or which may impair the customary use and enjoyment of the property by the occupants (HUD 4905.1, 2-13).
2. Required Repairs: The inspector shall identify health, safety, or major maintenance items as being required to be repaired or replaced. This also includes items that if not corrected would devalue, contribute to the escalation of decay, or reduce the full enjoyment and usefulness of the property (all items under 1. above).
3. Recommended Repairs: These items are minor in nature and their lack of repair will not contribute to the deterioration or usefulness of the property. These items should be fully identified so as to inform the lender and the applicant of the recommended repairs. Loan funds may be used for financing these repairs.
4. Repair Standards: If replacement or initial installation of an item is required, work must be in compliance with the **2000 International Residential Code and 1999 National Electric Code** and local municipal codes and ordinances. If more than one provision is applicable in any given situation, the more restrictive requirement shall apply.
5. Pride of Ownership: Applicants seeking home ownership through USDA/Rural Development programs are generally financially limited and may not be able to afford a home that will require frequent maintenance or repairs or high utility bills. Help our applicants start out with a house that is energy efficient and in good repair and that they will feel proud to own and want to maintain. By ensuring that the home is in good repair, you will be helping to ensure that the lender for which you are performing this inspection will have a more satisfied and financially secure customer and in doing so will provide better security for the loan.

C. Checklist Items - An Adequate Existing Dwelling is Further Defined As: [REF: RD 1924-A, 3550, HUD 4905.1 & 4150.2]

Mark every blank with one of the following: R-repairs needed; N-no repairs needed; S-see inspection report.

1. Termites/Pests:

- a. Termite Inspection/Certification: Inspection and certification is required. Treatment is required if an active infestation is found. Inspection, certification and treatment must be by a licensed individual. (HUD 4150.2, 3-6.A.6)
- b. Termite Damage: Structural and aesthetic damage is required to be repaired or replaced.

- c. _____ Pests: If infested with roaches, ants, flees, silverfish, rats, mice, or other pests, treatment is required and damage must be repaired. Caulk, fill, or eliminate areas frequented by pests.

2. **Site:**

- a. _____ Unacceptable Locations: Sites that are adjacent to or so close to hazardous conditions, noxious odors, offensive sights, excessive noise (above 65-75 decibels), or other adverse conditions that would threaten the health, safety, or reduce the quality of life, environment, or enjoyment of the property by the applicant are not acceptable [i.e. electrical substations or high voltage lines, sewage treatment facilities, airports, industrial areas, high traffic areas (HUD 4150.2, 2-2)].
- b. _____ Flood Plain: Sites within a flood plain or in a flood hazard area are required to be insured by the National Flood Insurance Program (HUD 4150.2, 2-2.L)
- c. _____ Access Road: The property is accessible from a publically maintained hard surfaced road typical for the area and in compliance with local requirements (gravel road is acceptable if well maintained and typical for the area).
- d. _____ Site Drainage: Graded so as to provide **positive, rapid drainage away from the house** and prevent ponding of water (HUD 4150.2, 3-6.A.4). Optimally, provide 6" of slope away from house in the first 10'-0". **Low areas next to house or sloping toward house not acceptable.**
- e. _____ Finish Grade: Ground or mulch immediately adjacent to the house must be 6" below the bottom of the siding.
- f. _____ Utilities: The property is serviced by safe dependable utilities with proper easements.
- g. _____ Driveway/Walk: Concrete if typical for neighborhood and in good usable condition (cracks or separations are minor and not hazardous for pedestrians).
- h. _____ Sump Pump: Drain outlet is drained away from the house and daylighted to ditch or collection area.

3. **Foundations:**

- a. _____ Frostline: Footings are below frostline (36" north of the I-70 and 30" south of the I-70, typically unless otherwise designated by the local municipality).
- b. _____ Foundation: Solid foundation walls of concrete (concrete block acceptable for crawl space foundation walls). Cracks or damage must be minor or repairable. Unstable conditions or structural damage is not acceptable.
- c. _____ Crawl Spaces: To be dry or made to be dry, and have at least a uniform clearance height of 18" from the ground or adequate clearance for repair and inspection access and have adequate ventilation. Provide a vapor barrier over all exposed earth, lap edge 6" minimum. Must have cross ventilation as required by code.
- d. _____ Basement: Wall cracks are minimal and epoxied to prevent seepage. Exterior basement stairwells have an adequate cleared drain with raised strainer or other device to prevent flooding of the well and seepage into the basement. Concrete block basements are highly susceptible to damage and may not be acceptable.
- e. _____ Wet Basements or Crawl Spaces are Not Acceptable: Sump pump or drainage correction/alteration and repair of areas where water enters basement or crawl space must be accomplished prior to closing! The crawl space and basement must be dry and clear of moisture or dampness prior to the closing of the loan!

4. **Exterior:**

- a. _____ Wood Siding: Solid, tight, and have good paint cover.
- b. _____ Vinyl Siding: in good condition with no holes or cracks.
- c. _____ Masonry: Brick veneer or masonry that is not plumb, cracked, or damaged should be repaired.
- d. _____ Trim: Free from rot and excessive splits.
- e. _____ Windows: Dual paned or single paned primary with a storm window. Must have an insect screen in good repair. Windows are caulked around frame and all glass is free of cracks, breaks, or broken seals that cause fogging. Each window is openable and lockable.
- f. _____ Exterior Doors: Insulated steel or solid core wood. Hollow core doors need to have storm door (not screen-only door). Each door has a keyed lock. The doors and all hardware are in good condition.

- g. _____ Porches/Decks: Concrete porches should be level, free of wide cracks or variations in height, and be structurally sound. Decks may be of treated wood, Redwood, or Cedar and must be free of rot. All porches and steps 30" above grade **must** have handrails and/or guardrails as required by IRC.
- h. _____ Gutters: Adequate in size, in good condition, properly sloped and anchored with sufficient downspouts and splash blocks or extensions to ensure rapid and positive drainage away from the house.
- i. _____ Roofing: Roof covering is structurally sound, water tight, and a life of 5 years or more without replacement or repair. All roofing is properly installed, flashed, and has drip edge. When reroofing is needed, roofs consisting of 2 layers of shingles need to have all old shingles removed prior to reroofing (HUD 4905.1, 2-12). Roofs that can not be repaired or are in a poor state of repair are not acceptable. **Barton, Vernon, Bates, Lawrence, Dade, Cedar, St Clair, Greene, Polk and Webster Counties shall have all roofing removed regardless of number of layers of existing roofing (Hail Counties as per the 2000 IRC).**
- j. _____ Chimneys or Flues: Metal chimneys are well supported and have proper clearances to combustibles. Exposed metal chimneys in areas such as closets will need to be enclosed. Masonry flues need to be plumb, free of cracks and have tight mortar joints (lining of the flue is recommended).

5. Ventilation:

- a. _____ Attic Ventilation: Must have a ratio of 1:150, including eaves (standard 8"x 16" soffit vents have approximately 56 square inches of net vent area). Ventilation can be reduced to 1:300 if 50%-80% of ventilation is located at or near the ridge with the remaining ventilation at the soffit. Add air chutes between rafters if insulation is increased to the point that it would restrict soffit ventilation.

6. Garage:

- a. _____ Garage Floor: 12" above the street or a special drainage system is in place that prevents water from flowing into the garage. Garage door is operable and in good condition with a functional lock.
- b. _____ Attached Garages: Garage ceiling and interior wall covered with 1/2" thick taped drywall. Basement garages will be separated from other basement areas with a wall with drywall each side and 1 3/8 inch solid core door or steel insulated door. The garage ceiling must be covered with 1/2 inch gyp. bd.
- c. _____ Door: Garage door shall be in good repair with functional lock. Back of door is free of mold and mildew.

7. Interior:

- a. _____ Space Requirements: Space necessary to assure suitable living, sleeping, cooking and dining without sacrificing safety, reasonable privacy, function, and sanitary conditions.
- b. _____ Structurally Sound: Walls, roof, and all structural components are plumb, straight, and structurally sound throughout. Weakened, rotted, or damaged components need to be reinforced or replaced.
- c. _____ Interior Surfaces: Walls and ceilings are in good repair and have good paint covering or wallpaper. Peeling paint or wall paper or discolored walls from smoking need to be properly prepared and painted.
- d. _____ Smoke Detectors: Shall be A/C D/C and installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions in each bedroom, outside each bedroom area in the hall and on each level of the house (to include the basement, even if unfinished).
- e. _____ Bedroom Windows and Basements with Habitable Rooms: Must have an operable sash capable of providing emergency egress. The sash must be operable without key or tool; top of sill/bottom of clear opening within 44" of floor; a clear opening (24" min. high, 20" min. wide) with a total square footage of 5.7 SF net clear area for floors above grade level or 5.0 at grade level (w/in 44" of grade).
- f. _____ Doors: Doors and trim are properly aligned, secure in their frames, finished, and in good repair. Defaced, broken, punctured, or damaged doors or hardware shall be replaced.
- g. _____ Door Stops: Each door has a base type door stop (hinge stops not acceptable due to typical puncturing).
- h. _____ Subflooring: Properly nailed, free of moisture and rot, and does not excessively squeak or moan. Unleveled floors should be repaired, if economically possible. Floors that are not level or not in good repair so as to indicate substantial settling or structural problems may not be acceptable.
- i. _____ Floor Covering: Carpet or flooring that is heavily worn, damaged, or stained should be replaced. Carpet is clean, stretched taut and in good condition.
- j. _____ Kitchen Cabinets: Kitchen countertop frontage should be at least 7' (excluding range and sink frontage). Countertops and cabinets should be in good condition with all doors and drawers in good working

order. Space is provided for a stove and refrigerator. Storage is adequate for food and cooking utensils.

- k. _____ Bathrooms: Accessible to bedrooms without passing through other living areas and of adequate size to provide a standard bathtub, lavatory and water closet (1/2 bathes excluded). Fixtures are in good repair and not defiled or unpleasant in appearance. Wall and ceiling paint is glossy or impervious to moisture.
- l. _____ Exhaust Vents: **Range hoods should be vented to the exterior, non vented are acceptable provided they are UL approved. Bathrooms must have a vent fan vented to the exterior or an exterior operable window.**
- m. _____ Stairs: Stairways must be 3' wide minimum. All stairs must have a handrail – single risers between rooms need not have a handrail. A guardrail is required if the floor or landing level or rise of stairs is 30" or more above adjacent floor or grade. Stairs built after 2000 must have 10 inch tread minimum (with nosing) (treads on existing pre-IRC 2000 stairs may be 9" minimum) and a 7 ¾ inch riser maximum (risers on existing pre-IRC 2000 stairs may be 8" maximum). Handrail and stairs must in good sturdy condition.
- n. _____ Water Heater: In good working condition; 30 gallon capacity **minimum**; life expectancy of 5 years; a pressure/**temperature** relief valve with 3/4" drain pipe is extended to within 6" of concrete floor or direct into floor drain if wood subflooring (**or through floor**).
- o. _____ Fireplace: In good repair, operable damper.

8. HVAC:

- a. _____ Heating: Heat supplied directly to each finished room is required. Floor or wall furnaces are not acceptable.
- b. _____ HVAC Equipment: Must be safe to operate, have adequate capacity and quality, be protected from destructive elements, have reasonable future utility, durability and economy so as to last 5 years without replacement or major repairs. Installation of new furnace shall comply with **2000 IRC** building code.
- c. _____ Gas: Furnace, water heater, range or other gas appliances should be inspected by gas company or person specializing in repairing and servicing gas appliances prior to activating gas appliances.
- d. _____ Gas fueled equipment located in the garage must be installed 18" above the garage floor level.

9. Plumbing:

- a. _____ Plumbing: All piping is in good repair with no evidence of leaks, excessive corrosion/mineral deposits, or potential problems (especially basement ceiling or crawl space plumbing or hose bib connections).
- b. _____ Sinks: Kitchen and bathroom sinks and faucets and bathtubs are typical and in good repair.
- c. _____ Shut-off Valves: Should be provided for each plumbing fixture, if feasible. If repairs are necessary, a valve will be installed on the repaired fixture.
- d. _____ Wells: Individual wells and the water they supply must be inspected and approved by the Missouri Department of Health. A safe drinking water sample must be obtained.
- e. _____ Waste Water Treatment Systems: Septic, lagoon, or other type of on-site sewage treatment systems must be inspected and in working order.

10. Electrical:

- a. _____ GFI: Ground fault circuit interrupter in bath; **all kitchen counter top receptacles (include bar or island)**; all receptacles in an unfinished basement, garage, carport or exterior of house (except those receptacles that are dedicated to major appliances or sump pumps).
- b. _____ Lights: Lighting fixtures to be in good order with bulbs, lenses, shades, and all parts intact and working.
- c. _____ Wiring: Exposed wiring in attic, crawl space, and basement ceiling is safe and in good repair. Exposed wiring in basement or closets is in conduit where there is the potential for human contact. Splices are in covered junction boxes. Switches, receptacles, and service plugs will have proper covers and broken items replaced. Adequate service line with weatherhead to meet the requirements of the servicing electrical utility.
- d. _____ Panel: Existing electrical breaker or fuse box must be 100 amp minimum for small houses. 200 amp panel may be necessary for electric heat and/or central air. Panel is safe, in good working order and easily accessed.

11. Repairs:

- a. _____ Longevity: No major repairs or replacement is expected for 5 years on the roof, structure, plumbing, electrical, or heating systems. *At applicant's request, leniency may be used in the guaranteed program.*
- b. _____ Code Compliance: All repair or replacement work shall be in accordance with the **2000 International Residential Code and the 1999 National Electric Code** and as amended by State and local authorities with the most stringent requirement taking precedence.

12. Prohibited Items:

- a. _____ Defective Conditions: Defective construction, poor workmanship, evidence of continuing settlement, excessive dampness, leakage, decay, termites, or other conditions impairing the safety, sanitation or structural soundness of the dwelling shall render the property unacceptable until the defects or conditions have been remedied and the probability of further damage eliminated (HUD 4905.1, 2-8).
- b. _____ Excess Land: Excess land that is not needed or typical for a single family residence is to be excluded from the mortgage security.
- c. _____ Pools: In-ground swimming pools, saunas, hot tubs, or over-improvements that exceed modest criteria are not permitted under RD Direct loans without RD waiver.

13. Warnings:

- a. _____ Lead Paint: For houses constructed prior to 1978, any chipped, flaking, chalky or peeling paint *should* be tested for lead. If lead is present, the defective paint *should* be removed and then the clean surface repainted (or covered/encapsulated with another building material siding, paneling, drywall, etc.) (HUD 4150.2). Painting over the lead-based paint is not a solution to the problem!
- b. _____ The applicant must be provided with a copy of the lead paint warning pamphlet: "Protect your Family from Lead in your Home". All laws and regulations regarding the safe removal or altering of lead based paints must be followed.
- c. _____ Asbestos: Older houses containing transite siding, original roofing shingles, pipe or boiler insulation, and original resilient flooring may contain asbestos. Asbestos containing building materials present a hazard if broken, sanded, scrapped, drilled, or otherwise damaged so as to release asbestos fibers into the air. Category I and II non-friable asbestos in a residential building can be removed by knowledgeable individuals (consult with Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of Environmental Quality, Air Pollution Control Program, 573-751-4817, prior to beginning any work that requires altering or removal. Asbestos containing building materials that are not in good condition or friable are required to be removed by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor [Missouri State Law MACL 643 (1992)].
- d. _____ Asbestos containing materials must be disposed of legally which may require disposing of at a permitted sanitary landfill. Rural Development suggests that the applicant sign a statement acknowledging the potential asbestos containing building materials and the potential health risks and added costs that may be attributed to the removal or altering of these materials. The applicant must be provided with a copy of MO DNR Division of Environmental Quality, Technical Bulletin: "Asbestos", which describes the hazards and the requirements that must be met for the removal or altering of asbestos containing building materials.

A house can not be turned down solely because it has suspected asbestos containing building materials.

14. Disclaimers:

- a. Checklist Limitations: This checklist is not inclusive of all the inspection criteria that is required and only refers to specific information that applies to USDA\Rural Development or that has shown in the past to need special attention. Exercise good common sense and good judgment in completing the inspection and report.
- b. Conflicting Requirements: If more than one code requirement is applicable in any given situation, the more stringent requirement shall apply.
- c. Interpretation or Waivers: An interpretation or waiver of items on this checklist could be considered on a case by case basis from the Rural Development Area Office. However, the interpretation or waiver shall be in the best long term interests of the applicant and government and not for the convenience or interests of others that may gain from short term solutions.

