

## UPCS-V

### Converting HQS to UPCS-V

On May 4, 2016, in Federal Register Notices 81 FR 26759, HUD announced a new inspection and oversight approach called UPCS-V.

#### What is UPCS-V?

UPCS-V is the new updated inspection standard for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. UPCS stand for Uniform Physical Condition Standard. UPCS-V combines the consistency and objectivity of UPCS inspections, with the focus on the condition of individual housing units of HQS inspections. UPCS-V is based on UPCS protocol and definitions (with the "V" signifying "Voucher") with additions of unique items from the HQS inspection.

The primary goals of UPCS-V are to:

- Ensure health & safety of tenants.
- Align standards more closely with other HUD programs.
- Provide insight to the condition of assisted housing.
- Enhance HUD's oversight abilities.

#### Comparison between HQS, & UPCS-V

High-Level Similarities And Differences Between UPCS-V And HQS	HQS	UPCS-V
Provides standardized list of deficiencies and measurable criteria		X
Defined standardized list of Life Threatening and Emergency items		X
Up-to-date health and safety standards		X
Designed as a unit-based inspection standard for federally assisted units	X	X
Inspection standard aligned with other federally assisted programs		X
Pass/Fail results for all deficiencies	X	X
PHA ability to adopt HUD-approved variances	X	X
Uniform inspector training and registration		X
Includes guidance through the use of decision trees that lead to more consistent observations		X
Captures level of severity for line item deficiencies		X
Unit and room acceptability criteria	X	X
Standardized criteria for PHA submission of electronic inspection data to HUD		X
Customized unit condition index to provide value added analytics of inspection data to PHAs and stakeholders		X
Photo requirements for fail deficiencies		X
Allow PHAs the use photo and document evidence to ensure all fail deficiencies have been mitigated		X

Like UPCS, UPSC-V provides an objectively measured condition of the housing unit on standardized criteria, by looking at the Site, Building Exterior, Building System, Common Area, and Unit inspectable areas. Like HQS, UPSC-V results in a pass/fail decision.

Some additions focus on current advances in home inspections and changes to standards of health and safety threats in homes today. For example:

- The addition of Guardrail, AFCI, and Carbon Monoxide Detector deficiencies.
- The expansion of Receptacle (Outlet) / Switch and Health & Safety deficiencies, such as the addition of Structural Hazards, Evidence of Roaches, and Lead Based Paint.

Some changes focus on the conditions and deficiencies that directly affect the tenant and the habitability of the unit. For example:

- The addition of Neighborhood Condition and Disconnected Utilities deficiencies.
- The reduction of deficiencies in the Site, Building Exterior, Building System, and Common Area that do not directly affect the tenant.
- The expansion of Laundry Room and Lighting deficiencies.

UPCS-V will use a deficiency driven protocol, rather than going through a static checklist. Deficiencies would be classified on an escalating scale, from minor (L1) to significant (L3), and critical deficiencies may be further classified as life threatening (LT) or emergency (E).

Deficiencies are recorded at different levels (1-3) of severity but only the deficiencies that will directly impact habitability will fail the inspection. Any items that do not "fail," merely become part of the Unit Condition Index. The only items outside of the unit that fail the inspection are those that directly and negatively affect the tenant.

### **What is the Unit Condition Index?**

UPCS-V will use a new data transmission tool to generate the Unit Condition Index which will provide valuable information to tenants, homeowners and PHAs about the condition of the unit. Inspectors will conduct inspections on a handheld device in order to capture deficiencies, using photographic evidence and recording of inspection findings in real-time.

The Unit Condition Index will serve as a valuable oversight and monitoring tool for PHAs and HUD. Unlike a UPCS inspection, in which a low score may hold negative consequences for a PHA, the Unit Condition Index will leverage the wealth of inspection data collected by HUD to provide value-added feedback to PHAs, owners, tenants on the comparative condition of their units. The Unit Condition Index provides objectively measured condition of the housing unit on standardized criteria.