U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-8000

OFFICE OF MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

Special Attention of:	Notice H 2026-06
All Multifamily Regional Center Directors All Multifamily Satellite Office Directors All Multifamily Asset Management Division Directors All Multifamily Operations Officers All Multifamily Field Counsel All Contract Administrators All Multifamily Project Owners	Issued: September 10, 2026 Expires: This Notice remains in effect until amended, rescinded, or superseded Supersedes (in part): *Minimum Property Standards for Housing, 1994 edition* (Handbook 4910.1)

SUBJECT: Revisions to Chapter 1, Section 100–2.20 (Emergency Call Systems) of *Minimum Property Standards for Housing, 1994 Edition* (Handbook 4910.1)

I. Purpose

This notice revises Chapter 1, Section 100–2.20 (Emergency Call Systems) of *Minimum Property Standards for Housing, 1994 Edition* (Handbook 4910.1) (the MPS Handbook) to make emergency call systems an optional technology in certain elderly multifamily housing projects.

II. Applicability

This notice applies to elderly multifamily housing projects with 20 or more units that are subject to HUD minimum property standards under 24 CFR part 200, subpart S, which is housing constructed under HUD mortgage insurance and elderly projects subject to 24 CFR part 891.120.[1] Minimum property standards do not apply to uninsured projects with Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contracts[2], unless they are Section 202/8 HAP Contracts.

Owners of projects that are subject to emergency call system requirements separate and apart from this Notice in accordance with a HUD business agreement (i.e., a grant agreement, contract, etc.) may request an amendment to such an agreement to strike the requirement pursuant to the revised policy outlined in this notice.

[1] 24 CFR part 891 applies to the Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities programs. However, this Notice only applies to the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program.
[2] Although the early Section 8 HAP regulations required compliance with MPS, they were amended in 1998 to require compliance with the uniform physical condition standards promulgated in 24 CFR part 5, subpart G (Physical Condition Standards and Inspection Requirements).

III. Background

HUD in the mid-1970s codified a set of minimum design and construction standards,[3] called Minimum Property Standards (MPS), for housing built under HUD mortgage insurance programs and the low-rent public housing program.[4] The standards are intended to "provide a sound basis for determining the acceptability of housing built"[5] under these programs. HUD in the mid-1990s extended the MPS through rulemaking to all Section 202 projects.[6]

The MPS Handbook requires that Owners of properties for the elderly that contain 20 or more living units must provide an emergency call system in "each bathroom and one bed location in each living unit."[7] The system is required in case residents require assistance in their unit as the result of an emergency such as a fall, fire, or medical crisis.

IV. Issues with Emergency Call Systems

Older emergency call systems are typically manual "pull-cord" technology, that, when pulled by a resident, alert a monitored call-center, front-desk, or emergency response service. Advances made in wireless and electronic technology now offer a broader set of call-system options. In a 2014 memorandum,[8] the Office of Multifamily Housing (MFH) described how the functional requirements of an older emergency call system could be met using a variety of more-modern options, including electronic and wireless emergency alert systems.

MFH is aware that Owners may lack the resources to repair or replace inoperable pull-cord systems. In addition to providing a false sense of security to residents, these defunct systems may be cited during HUD inspections if the system is blocked, does not function properly, or if a pull cord is higher than six inches off the floor.[9] Even properties with fully functioning pull-cord systems or other modernized technologies may have trouble obtaining commercial insurance, as some insurers consider the systems to pose liability risks.[10] Overall, these circumstances can pose significant financial and operational challenges to Owners of housing for the elderly.

V. Policy Revision

In response to the above-cited challenges, HUD revises Chapter 1 of the MPS Handbook to strike Section 100–2.20. While Owners may continue to furnish and maintain an operable emergency call system, HUD is requiring the removal of inoperable pull-cord or

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[3] 24 CFR part 200, subpart S.
[4] Public Housing under Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937.
[5] 24 CFR § 200.929.
[6] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-1996-03-22/pdf/96-6312.pdf.
[7] Paragraph 100–2.20 of HUD Handbook 4910.1.
[8] https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/emergency_call_system_memo.pdf.
[9] https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/NSPIRE-Standard-Call-for-Aid-System_20230620.pdf.
[10] See Emergency: Affordable Housing's Pull Cord Problem and the Unintended Insurance Ramifications by Jeffrey G, Robert at https://www.scottins.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Affordable-Housings-Pull-Cord-Problem-and-the-Unintended-Insurance-Ramifications.pdf.

other inoperable emergency call systems. Any Owner who chooses to remove an operable system must notify tenants in advance and consider comments received. In the absence of a functioning emergency-call system, HUD encourages Owners to conduct regular welfare checks, especially for those living alone or who have limited mobility.

VI. Questions

Send questions about this Notice to AssetManagementPolicy@hud.gov.

Joseph M. Gormley,
performing the delegable duties of the
Assistant Secretary for Housing – Federal
Housing Commissioner