

California Department of Housing and Community Development

Mobilehome Park Inspections Audit

Recommendations and Actions

Recommendation 1

To reduce the risk of unidentified health and safety violations, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) should by January 2021 use its existing authority to develop written policies and procedures for selecting parks for its park inspections that consider for all parks the number and severity of recent complaints as well as the length of time since HCD conducted any type of park visit.

Action

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has developed new selection criteria in order to inspect mobilehome parks that haven't been visited in recent years.

Recommendation 2

To reduce health and safety risks in parks, HCD should by September 2020 do the following: 1) Develop written guidance that specifies what constitutes a field monitoring visit, how inspectors should choose parks for field monitoring, and how inspectors will document these visits. 2) Document facility IDs and dates for all inspections and field monitoring visits in CASAS so that staff can readily determine the length of time since each park's last inspection or field monitoring visit and the type of inspection or visit that HCD conducted.

Action

HCD plans to better guide and document field monitoring visits in mobilehome parks.

Recommendation 3

To improve consistency in inspections, HCD should by July 2021 develop and implement procedures to do the following: 1) Specify the factors that inspectors should consider when deciding whether to cite common types of violations. 2) Implement and begin providing periodic refresher training to its inspectors to reinforce inspection policies. 3) Require a secondary review of a selection of inspection reports to ensure that staff members follow key legal and HCD policy requirements. These procedures should specify how often secondary reviewers shall review reports, how many reports they shall review, what to look for during these reviews, and how to document the secondary review.

Action

HCD plans to provide additional training to inspectors and standardized guidelines on common violations in mobilehome parks. HCD will also perform a secondary review of inspection reports to ensure consistency and compliance of new guidelines.

Recommendation 4

To ensure that park owners and residents have sufficient information to understand HCD's inspection process, HCD should by September 2020: 1) Establish procedures for promptly mailing notices to park owners and residents and consistently document when it mails notices. 2) Establish a process to document its reviews of compliance with time frames for mailing required notices. 3) Establish procedures to ensure that it invites residents to all live preinspection conferences it conducts.

Action

HCD will improve communication procedures to provide information to mobilehome park owners and residents in a timely manner.

Recommendation 5

To ensure that complaints alleging potential health and safety violations are inspected in a timely manner, HCD should by September 2020 begin periodically monitoring its compliance with time requirements for conducting complaint inspections.

Action

HCD will monitor complaint timelines to ensure timeframes are kept.

Recommendation 6

To demonstrate that it makes reasonable efforts to consult with complainants before inspectors perform complaint inspections, to inform them of the results, and to notify them of options available if their allegations are not health and safety violations or fall outside HCD jurisdiction, HCD should by January 2021 develop procedures to do the following: 1) Require inspectors to document a reasonable number of attempts to contact complainants before conducting the inspection of the complaint. 2) Require staff to notify complainants in writing of the results of the inspection and document the notification. 3) Verify that inspectors include information about complainants' right to pursue private civil or other action when applicable.

Action

HCD will provide staff and inspector training to improve communication with mobilehome park residents and owners.

Recommendation 7

To ensure that HCD promptly communicates all required information to park owners and residents, HCD should by September 2020: 1) Review and revise the notices it issues to ensure that they comply with statutory requirements, such as providing information regarding the right to appeal inspectors' decisions and a list of local agencies that offer home rehabilitation or repair programs. 2) Establish a process to review notifications annually for compliance with any changes in its inspection procedures.

Action

HCD will improve communication efforts to ensure mobilehome park residents and owners receive information regarding their legal rights and available resources.

Recommendation 8

To ensure that HCD appropriately uses the revenue from fees it collects for the parks program activities only for the fees' intended purposes, HCD should, by September 2020, require staff, including inspectors, in the codes and standards division to charge hours that accurately reflect the work they perform. To ensure that HCD appropriately tracks the time inspectors spend on each program activity, HCD should by September 2020 rescind the time reporting guidance in the August 2015 memorandum and issue new guidance in accordance with HCD policy. It should then require managers to verify the accuracy of inspector time sheets. To ensure that HCD is able to determine its anticipated workload needs, HCD should, by September 2020, establish procedures that ensure staff accurately record time spent on each program activity in CASAS.

Action

HCD has altered its time reporting and data collecting practices to accurately reflect and code work performed. HCD will also do internal reviews to verify accuracy and consistency in reporting.

Recommendation 9

To prevent misuse of state time and state vehicles by inspectors, HCD should by September 2020 establish a formal process to routinely monitor vehicle usage including specifics on how and when managers should review inspectors' GPS data, such as information on location and mileage use, to ensure that inspectors use state vehicles and state time only for their official duties.

Action

HCD has established manager and supervisor monitoring requirements, including using GPS tracking, to ensure the responsible use of state vehicles.

Recommendation 10

To ensure that it is aware of any potential conflicts of interests that its inspectors may have, HCD should by September 2020 develop procedures to do the following: 1) Review the annual and assuming-office Form 700s of all inspectors with reportable financial interests to identify potential conflicts of interest. 2) Ensure that staff promptly notify the Form 700 filing officer of all inspectors hired or leaving HCD employment. To ensure that it is aware of any potential conflicts of interests that inspectors may have involving real property, HCD should by January 2021 amend its conflict of interest code to require inspectors to disclose financial interests in real property. To ensure that it complies with state law regarding reporting requirements for Form 700s, by August 2020 HCD should notify inspectors with missing Form 700s of their responsibility to file and the potential penalties that may be assessed if they fail to do so. HCD should notify the Fair Political Practices Commission about any inspectors that do not submit the forms as required after notification was sent, as well as those that should have submitted Form 700s but who cannot now be located.

Action

HCD is identifying all past and current employees who have not filed their Form 700 statements and notifying them of potential penalties for noncompliance. HCD will also continue to review Form 700 statements to identify any potential conflicts of interest.

Recommendation 11

To demonstrate that it appropriately addresses all complaints alleging inspector misconduct, HCD should by September 2020 do the following: 1) Establish policies to document all complaints against inspectors and the steps it takes to address those complaints. 2) Refer all complaints against inspectors alleging misconduct to its equal employment opportunity officer or other individual specified in policy.

Action

HCD is establishing internal investigation procedures regarding inspector complaints.

Recommendation 12

To ensure that HCD evaluates LEA oversight of mobile home parks effectively, by January 2021, HCD should: 1) Continue its efforts to finalize its policies and procedures for evaluating LEAs and ensure staff follows its procedures for handling of complaints it forwards to those LEAs. 2) Develop a formalized schedule to evaluate an adequate number of LEAs each year. HCD could establish a risk-based approach for selecting LEAs to evaluate. 3) Develop formal training for its inspectors in the use of its inspection checklist when conducting LEA evaluations.

Action

HCD will formalize procedures to monitor and evaluate local enforcement agencies in their oversight of mobilehome parks.