



**V.A. FEE COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR  
GUIDE  
2006**

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## Overview of VA Practices and Procedures

The Construction and Valuation Section (263) issues Notices of Value (NOVs), VA Form 26-1843, and attachments to notify the lenders, veterans, builders, and inspectors of the value and requirements for closing each individual property. LAPP approved lenders issue a Lender's Notice of Value (NOV). Each individual property is assigned a VA case number. The properties are submitted to us under two programs, existing and proposed.

### **Existing Construction:**

The existing program includes homes over one year old and new homes covered by a HUD approved 10-year warranty or a 1-year VA builder warranty. These homes are not inspected by VA compliance inspectors.

### **Proposed Construction:**

The proposed program includes new construction. An approved builder must submit certified plans and specifications to VA or a LAPP lender. After review a NOV is issued.

Each inspection will be scheduled by the builder or lender. Prior to inspection, you must receive the plans and specifications with VA Form 26-1805-1 for cases processed by the lender as LAPP, or an IND (Individual) with the plans and specifications for cases processed by VA. You should not make an inspection based on plans and specifications supplied directly by the lender or left at the job site, as these may not have been reviewed for acceptability. They also may be different from the plans used by the appraiser.

When the appraisal is requested, the builder submits 2 sets of plans and specifications to the lender to allow a review for acceptability and to assure all documentation on the proposed construction checklist are included. If the lender is processing under LAP, one set of plans and specifications is sent to the appraiser and one set to the inspector with copy of the VA Form 26-1805-1, Request for Determination of Reasonable Value. On cases processed by VA, both sets are provided to the appraiser who returns them to VA with the completed appraisal. After the appraisal is reviewed and a NOV issued, a copy of the NOV is sent to the inspector and a copy retained in the VA file.

If the property is covered by a HUD approved 10-year insurance warranty, only a final inspection will be required. Otherwise, three full inspections are required. In areas where HUD has approved local inspections, the local inspectors may be used for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage inspections. The final inspection must be performed by a VA inspector.

We also issue a Master Certificate of Reasonable Value (MCRV). This is a group of more than five homes. The MCRV is issued like an individual NOV except it is on VA Form 26-1843a. It is assigned a case number preceded by CA. When you do an inspection on a property from a MCRV, you must show the CA number and the item number shown on the back of the MCRV for the individual property. The MCRV's are issued two different ways. One way is SET LOTS, where the builder pre-plans the whole master. The other is BUILDER CHOICE, where the builder lists the properties but the purchaser selects the plans on the lots. The inspector on BUILDER CHOICE MCRV is responsible for obtaining a plot plan of the lot when he makes his first inspection. Also he/she must note the plan number on the final inspection. No matter which type of MCRV, if the MCRV has any options, you must list the options used on the final report.

A builder who must have a full set of inspections can request an inspector to be assigned to a property prior to ordering the appraisal. **YOU MUST HAVE THEIR REQUEST FOR AN EARLY START AND OUR SIGNATURE SHOWING YOU AS THE INSPECTOR BEFORE YOU CAN MAKE THE INSPECTION.**

## **I. PURPOSE OF INSPECTIONS**

To verify that all improvements are in accordance with:

- a. Plans and specifications.
- b. Construction must meet State, county, or local building codes enforced in the jurisdiction in which the property is located. In the absence of a state, county, or local building code enforced in the jurisdiction where the property is located, the VA Minimum Property Requirements (MPR's) shall be the applicable provisions of the current International Residential Code, One and Two Family Dwelling Code. In those instances in which the International Residential Code One and Two Family Dwelling Code apply, the mandatory codes or standards incorporated by reference and the requirements of 24 CFR 200.926e shall apply. In all proposed construction cases, VA will require compliance with 24 CFR 200.926d, Construction Requirements.
- c. Methods, practices, and kinds or uses of materials required, advocated, or approved in HUD bulletins relative to new materials and methods of construction.
- d. All requirements, standards, practices, etc. issued by HUD are applicable for VA purposes.
- e. Deviations from the above and/or additional requirements as may be released from the VA Regional Office.

## **II. VA POLICIES**

- a. When you are approved as a VA inspector, you are individually approved. Associates who work with your company are not permitted to perform VA inspections for you.
- b. If you need to take time off, please notify VA so we can be aware of the need to substitute an inspector on your assigned cases. We will attempt to assure that another VA inspector can process cases in your absence.
- c. Lenders and builders associated with our program are notified that 48 hours notice is required for inspection appointments.
- d. Final inspections must be submitted on VA form 26-1839, compliance inspection report, with a minimum of two photographs showing full front and full rear from the opposite side. Contact our office to order additional forms.
- e. VA will assist you in the collection of delinquent fees. Provide us the VA case number and a description of the collection efforts you have made. If you repeatedly have collection problems with an individual, you should notify VA that you will require cash in advance on future inspections.

### III. TERMINOLOGY AND FORMS

VA Forms may be viewed & downloaded at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/homeloanforms.htm>

- a. LAP lender - A lender approved to underwrite credit and appraisals for VA.
- b. NOV (Notice of Value) - Form completed by a LAP lender showing the appraised value and conditions of the appraisal that must be satisfied before loan closing.
- c. VA Form 26-1839 - Compliance Inspection Report
- d. VA Form 26-1844 - Request for Acceptance of Changes in Approved Drawings and Specifications (Change Order Form)
- e. VA Form 26-6393 - Endorsement to NOV specifying changes processed by VA
- f. VA Form 26-1805-1 - Request for Determination of Reasonable Value
- g. VA Proposed Construction Checklist for builders

### IV. THE INSPECTION PROCESS

- a. You will receive the construction exhibits from VA or from a LAP lender. On LAP requests, the exhibits will be sent as soon as the appraisal is ordered with a copy of the VA Form 26-1805-1, Request for Determination of Reasonable Value. After the appraisal has been completed, the LAP lender will mail you a copy of the Notice of Value (NOV) for the case. If VA processes the case, you will receive a NOV with the construction exhibits after the appraisal has been performed.
- b. On receipt of the construction exhibits, you should establish a file for the case and review the plans and specifications to assure there are sufficient exhibits for inspections. Each set should contain the following items.
  - Specifications on VA Form 26-1852, Description of Materials, signed and dated by the builder in all cases and by the veteran when one is under contract in an individual case processed as “proposed or under construction”. Other specification formats are also acceptable, provided they are signed and dated by the builder and veteran as described above and are sufficiently detailed for VA appraisal and compliance inspection purposes.
  - Plot plan which includes the location of the well/septic systems, if applicable.
  - All exterior building elevations.
  - Foundation or basement plan.
  - Plan of all floors.
  - Sectional wall details
  - A certification signed and dated by a technically qualified and properly identified individual (such as, builder, architect, engineer, etc) which states, “I certify that the construction exhibits for (identification of the property by house type, lot, block, subdivision name, etc) meets all local code requirements and are in substantial conformity with VA minimum property requirements, including the energy conservation standards of the 1992 Council of American Building Officials’ Model Energy Code and the requirement for lead-free water piping.” VA will accept HUD Form 92541, Builder’s Certification of Plans, Specifications and Site, in lieu of this certification.

NOTE: If items required on the checklist are missing, the lender should be notified that you cannot complete an inspection without a complete set of construction exhibits.

c. When an inspection is requested, you must inquire whether a full compliment of inspections is required, or only a final inspection. If it is a request for reinspection, you should assure that you know the items of noncompliance, and have change orders (VA Form 26-1844) or endorsements (VA Form 26-6363) pertinent to the inspection.

d. On arrival at the job site with the plans and specifications furnished to you by VA or the lender, you must:

1. Be able to identify the property by observance of the Property Identification Card (VA Form 26-1853), or other property identification, conspicuously displayed and readily visible from the street.

NOTE: Do not continue with inspection procedure unless absolutely certain of property identification.

2. Ensure that the VA Poster 26-83-1, "Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law" is displayed for each property or group of properties being constructed simultaneously. If the poster is not displayed at the time of the initial compliance inspection, you must show it as a C-Item on the Compliance Inspection Report (VA Form 26-1839).

3. Ensure that the VA Poster 26-77-1, "Equal Housing Opportunity" is displayed for each property or group of properties being constructed simultaneously. If the poster is not displayed at the time of the initial compliance inspection, you must show it as a C-Item on the Compliance Inspection Report (VA Form 26-1839).

4. If the inspection is an initial inspection of the property, you must ensure that the structure is located on the property per the stamped plot plan, i.e., facing left or right; front, rear, and side yard set backs; grade elevations; flatwork location; sidewalk and driveway within allowable slopes, etc. If Master Certificate of Reasonable Value (MCRV) was issued as a builder choice, the builder must furnish you a plot plan at inspection.

## V. INSPECTION STAGES

a. First Inspection (Foundation) Stage

1. ***Excavation complete and ready for footings and foundations*** usually applies in localities where it is advisable to have the bearing soil examined before construction proceeds, or ***foundation walls complete and ready for backfill*** usually applies where soil conditions are generally uniform and free of faults likely to cause foundation problems.
2. For the excavation complete alternative, you assure that:
  - the site is properly identified.
  - the nature of the bearing soil
  - form work for footings or the condition and quality of the footing trench if forms are not required
  - compliance with construction exhibits and VA Minimum Property Requirements
  - the function dimensions are the same as shown on the plans, and that corners are squared. Position or lot (set backs) is same as shown on plot plans.

3. For the completion of foundation alternative, all of the items in 2 above will be observed and reported in addition to:

- the size, location, and condition of all footings, foundation walls, piers, and other supporting members
- the quality of materials and workmanship of masonry, damp proofing, and foundation drainage.

b. Second Inspection (Framing) Stage

You should inspect:

- All construction below the superstructure not installed or which was installed but not inspected or reported upon at the first inspection stage, including footings, foundations, piers, columns, waterproofing, and drainage provisions
- Construction of the superstructure, including quality of materials and workmanship, details of construction, and the suitability of arrangement of all items for subsequent installation of equipment and of interior and exterior finishing materials
- Plan of the dwelling, including the arrangement of partitions and the sizes and placement of all openings
- Roughing-in of mechanical work, including plumbing, heating and electric installations with respect to providing for the correct installation of fixtures, equipment, and accessories avoiding impairment of the strength of structural members, and proper operation of the completed systems.

Note: No second stage inspection is required for modular construction since the unit is fabricated in a factory and must be inspected to state standards.

c. Third Stage (Final) Inspection

1. You should inspect for acceptable completion of all specified onsite and offsite improvements in substantial compliance with the plans and specifications.

2. The table below lists the exterior and interior items to be inspected and reported upon during the final inspection stage.

***Exterior Inspection:***

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compaction of fill material</li> <li>• finish grading</li> <li>• drainage</li> <li>• utility connections</li> <li>• walks</li> <li>• drives</li> <li>• accessory buildings</li> <li>• retaining walls</li> <li>• planting</li> <li>• safety provisions at             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– terraces</li> <li>– porches</li> <li>– areaways</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection against the elements and penetration of moisture</li> <li>• masonry pointing</li> <li>• caulking at openings</li> <li>• paint coverage</li> <li>• flashing</li> <li>• design of dwelling structure</li> <li>• materials and details of their installation and finish</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offsite improvements including             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– utilities</li> <li>– storm sewer system</li> <li>– drainage channels</li> <li>– grading</li> <li>– curbs</li> <li>– gutters</li> <li>– paving</li> <li>– pavement edging</li> <li>– subgrade, and</li> <li>– base and wearing surface and erosion control</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

***Interior Inspection:***

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• design</li> <li>• materials, equipment, and details of their installation</li> <li>• interior surfaces and their finish treatment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cabinets and millwork</li> <li>• details and operation of systems, equipment, and fixtures related to             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– plumbing</li> <li>– heating</li> <li>– ventilating</li> <li>– electric</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality and operation of hardware</li> <li>• quality of             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– tilework</li> <li>– glass</li> <li>– linoleum</li> <li>– venting of attics and underfloor spaces</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

Note: Quality of construction. Such shortcomings as scratches in painted surfaces, poorly fitted doors and windows, cracks in walls, defective materials or equipment, etc., must be reported fully.

3. Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems - The inspector will include with the inspection report evidence obtained from the builder that installation is satisfactory to the health authority having jurisdiction.

**VI. HOW TO COMPLETE THE INSPECTION REPORT FORM (VA FORM 26-1839)**

All inspectors must utilize the compliance inspection report form (VA Form 26-1839) in the same manner. Following are instructions for filling out the report:

- Case Number: Enter VA loan number (add item number if a Master CRV).
- Property Identification: Enter property street address, lot and block number, and zip code.
- Name and Address of Lender: Enter the lender's name and mailing address.

- Name of Builder: Enter the builder's name and address.

## SECTION 1: INSPECTION OF ONSITE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The stage of construction at which inspection is being made is indicated by use of the appropriate check box. Reinspection is checked in all cases when a previous report has indicated "Reinspection Required."

Under "Condition of Construction at this Inspection", the appropriate condition or conditions are checked in accordance with the following:

Condition "A": "No evidence of noncompliance observed" is checked if the work has progressed to the inspection state being reported upon and has been completed in accordance with plans, specifications, and minimum property requirements.

**When this condition is indicated, no further entries are made in Section 1 of the form.**

Condition "B": "Substitutions or deviations" is reported where variations from plans and specifications and/or deviations from the applicable minimum property requirements are found to exist, regardless of whether or not costs are affected. The specific variations are listed in the blank lines provided and itemized by condition.

Condition "C": "Noncompliance, builder will comply without delay" is reported when unapproved variations from the approved certified plans and specifications are found and the builder is willing and able to satisfactorily correct or complete the work during the normal course of construction. List the noncompliance in the blank lines provided and itemized by condition (for example, "C-1 fix..."; "C-2 complete..."; "C-3 correct the...").

When noncompliance, Condition "C", has been checked at first or second inspection, the inspector indicates whether the items to be corrected or completed will be inspected at the next regular inspection or whether reinspection will be required. The check boxes at the bottom of Section 1 are used for this purpose. In these cases, reinspection is required when the work to be inspected will be concealed before the next regular inspection.

Condition "D": "Noncompliance, builder does not intend to comply" is reported when the builder indicates UNWILLINGNESS or INABILITY to correct or complete items of noncompliance.

Condition "E": "Dwelling habitable, but completion of certain improvements will be delayed by conditions beyond control" is reported only at third inspection or thereafter; e.g., when all building improvements are complete except concrete driveway, walk, and steps, which cannot be poured because of freezing weather. Leave boxes concerning lender's certification or inspection by VA compliance inspector blank. The VA Regional Office will mark the proper box.

## SECTION 2: INSPECTION OF OFFSITE IMPROVEMENTS

This section is completed when making the regular third inspection described in Section 1. Blank lines are provided for reporting inspection findings with respect to improvements such as walks, drives, streets, and utilities, specified for the subject property. As in Section 1, Conditions "A," "B," "C," "D," or "E" is checked and a description of the condition written in. Where incomplete or unsatisfactory work is reported, "Reinspection Required" is checked.

### SECTION 3: REINSPECTION OF WORK PREVIOUSLY INSPECTED

This section is used to report findings revealed by an additional inspection occasioned by the requirement for reinspection made on a previous report. Entries are made in the manner prescribed under Sections 1 and 2 above.

### SECTION 4: ESTIMATED COST OF INCOMPLETED ONSITE WORK

When Condition "E" has been checked under Section 1 or 3, the inspector enters an estimate of the cost of finishing the incomplete onsite work and the expected date of completion. The cost of any incomplete off-site work is not included. When the value of the postponed improvements is \$400 or less, and there are no other items of noncompliance, the compliance inspector is then authorized to final the report by checking box B of section 6 indicating "All improvements acceptably completed", and sign and distribute the report.

### SECTION 5: CERTIFICATION

All inspection reports (First, Second, Third, Special, or Reinspection) are completed insofar as the inspector is concerned by execution of the certification. It is to be noted that the certification is so worded that final acceptance and approval is not indicated at any stage. This affords the inspector or VA office the opportunity of reporting noncompliance which may have been overlooked at a previous inspection.

**SUBMISSION OF REPORT.** A copy of all reports is left at the job site for the convenience of the builder (**EXCEPT FOR SAH CASES**). One copy is retained by the inspector for his or her case file. One copy must be provided to the lender. **PLEASE NOTE: A copy must be provided to VA! The most current revision of VA Form 26-1839 does not contain a VA copy. You MUST provide a copy to VA! Please see C&V Memo 06-01 dated January 30, 2006. You may mail, scan and email, or fax a copy of this form to the office of jurisdiction.**

The final inspection will have the following statement, "All equipment, fixtures, and observable construction are in good condition, suitable, and ready for use."

All final inspection reports submitted to VA must include a minimum of two photographs (different views). A FULL front photograph showing the front and side of the subject property and a FULL rear photograph showing the opposite side will be required. Additional photographs may be submitted to document poor workmanship or improper construction techniques. Only one set of photographs will be required.

**You should mail the report to VA promptly after completion.**

If the Master CRV is a builder choice, you must submit a copy of the plot plan with your report. Also if it shows options, you must show no options or list the options used. **(Please refer to the Compliance Inspector Training Manual page 4 for the appropriate VA Regional Office's mailing address.)**

**YOU ARE REQUIRED TO RETAIN PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS NO LESS THAN 2 YEARS FOLLOWING THE FINAL INSPECTION.**

## VII. CHANGE ORDERS (VA FORM 26-1844)

a. Who must sign a change order request?

If a veteran is under contract, the change order must be signed by the veteran. If the property is not under contract, the change order must be signed by the builder, lender, or sponsor making the request for modification, and they must certify that the property is not under contract.

b. What form is acceptable for a change order request?

VA Form 26-1844 must be used to request a change to construction exhibits after the appraisal is done. There is one exception. If there is no veteran-purchaser involved and the change is limited to substitution of mechanical equipment of equal value, then you may check VA Form 26-1839, Section 1B, Substitutions or Deviations, describe the change of equipment and note the change on the related plans and specifications.

### **VIII. COUNTER-SIGNING CHANGE ORDERS AND INSPECTION**

a. Change Orders.

You are authorized to approve (countersign) and distribute a properly completed VA Form 26-1844, containing all required signatures, which does not involve deletions or a change in value. In these cases, the builder must complete VA Form 26-1844 in triplicate and have the form at the job site at the time of the scheduled inspection. The compliance inspector will review the change order to verify that no deletion of value change is requested and all parties (builder and veteran, if applicable) have signed the form. The inspector will inspect the property according to the plans, specifications and change order and sign the change order in the appropriate space. The builder will be given the original counter-signed change order, a copy will be retained by the inspector and the last copy will be forwarded to VA with the inspection report.

b. Inspection Reports.

You are authorized to approve (countersign) and distribute compliance inspection reports of first and intermediate stages of construction which do not report any noncompliance, substitutions or deviations. Compliance inspectors are also authorized to approve and distribute final or third-stage inspection reports which do not report any noncompliance, substitutions or deviations, or which report only items that could be covered by a lender's certification of an escrow.

### **IX. DELAYED INSTALLATION OF APPLIANCES AND FLOOR COVERING**

With the exception of floor covering in bathrooms and wood finish flooring, installation of appliances and finished floor covering may be delayed until as late as just prior to loan closing, provided the final inspection report includes the following:

- In Section 1, a description of all appliances and finish floor covering to be installed as identified in the specifications, for example, refrigerator brand and model, and the living area(s) involved, if not obvious.
- In Section 6, check "Prefinal Report Approved," and "Certification is required that lender's inspection prior to loan closing reveals satisfactory installation of specified appliances and finish floor covering as described in Item 1 in the area(s) identified in Item 1."

### **X. REINSPECTIONS**

If an inspection has been requested and the work has not progressed to such a point that the required inspection can be completed, a report shall be prepared and distributed in the usual manner; however, the report shall indicate "Reinspection Required."

If the work has progressed beyond the required inspection stage to such extent that significant items to be inspected have been concealed, the inspection will be deferred until the concealed work has been uncovered so as to permit satisfactory inspection.

## **XI. MANUFACTURED HOMES**

### a. General Information.

When the foundation for a manufactured home has **not** been fully completed and the unit has not been installed, the home is appraised as “proposed construction.”

In addition to the standard VA Minimum Property Requirements for proposed construction, the manufactured home unit must be properly attached to a permanent foundation system which is constructed to withstand both supporting loads and wind-overturning loads, and is acceptable to the building authority having jurisdiction.

The manufacturer’s installation instructions (used to determine the permissible points of support for vertical loads and points of attachment for the anchorage system used to resist horizontal and uplift forces) may be used as an additional reference guide.

### b. Construction Exhibits for Proposed Construction

- Specifications for the foundation and a plot plan as required for manufactured housing.
- For double-wide homes, a detail of the mating line piers, if applicable, plus a floor plan of the unit and exterior elevation drawings (the manufacturer’s sales brochure will suffice).
- In localities that require the underside of the unit to be completely enclosed, details of the perimeter enclosure that comply with those requirements.
- Any revisions needed to information provided in the manufacturer’s technical installation manual in order to comply with local requirements must be completed.
- Construction exhibits for any other on-site improvements, such as decks, enclosed patios, garages and carports, must also be provided.

### c. Foundations

Please refer to the tables that follow listing each foundation component and any related requirements for proposed construction cases.

The following table lists each foundation component and any related requirements for “proposed or under construction” cases.

**Foundation Requirements**

<b>Foundation Component</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<b>Piers and Footings</b>	<p>The load-bearing piers and footings must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be of sufficient size and number to distribute the weight of the manufactured home evenly</li> <li>• be of materials acceptable to the building authority having jurisdiction, and</li> <li>• (where applicable) have footings which extend below the frost line.</li> </ul>
<b>Concrete Slabs or Continuous Footings</b>	<p>Concrete slabs or continuous footings are acceptable in areas where their use is permitted by local building authorities. Steel anchorage devices must be cast into the concrete slab or footing and be capable of providing holding strength to resist horizontal and uplift forces.</p>
<b>Anchoring Devices</b>	<p>Anchoring devices, adequate to resist all loads, must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be attached to the main frame of the unit by a bolted, welded, or mechanical connector</li> <li>• be placed at every supporting pier or as specified by the manufacturer, and</li> <li>• extend into the pier footing.</li> </ul> <p>Anchoring straps or cables affixed to ground anchors, other than pier footings, will <b>not</b> meet this requirement.</p>
<b>Hurricane Ties</b>	<p>Properties located in Wind Zone II or III (wind speeds in excess of 80 mph) must be provided with diagonal hurricane ties which have been properly engineered for the location, and comply with the requirements of the building authority having jurisdiction.</p> <p><i><b>Important:</b></i> The installation procedures included in both the manufacturer’s foundation instructions and <i>NCS BCS Handbook A225.1</i> are <b>not</b> generally adequate for manufactured homes in these areas.</p>

Foundation Component	Requirement
<b>Flexible Connections for Seismic Activity</b>	<p>Properties located in areas of high seismic activity require special foundation designs to compensate for the effects of ground movement and to provide flexible connections between the foundation system and the manufactured home and all utility connections.</p> <p>Building authorities in these areas should be consulted for acceptable design features and special code requirements.</p>
<b>Permanent Perimeter Enclosure</b>	<p>A permanent perimeter enclosure (not “skirting”) with a continuous foundation-type footing will be required only when specifically required by the local building authority. When required, it must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designed to resist all forces which cause frost heave, soil settlement, or the shrinking or swelling of expansive soils without transmitting the movement or effects to the manufactured home, and</li> <li>• properly secured to the perimeter of the manufactured home to exclude entry of vermin and water, and provide ventilation and a means of access to the crawl space.</li> </ul>
<b>Moisture and Humidity Reduction</b>	<p>The reduction of moisture and humidity in an enclosed under floor space is required. Except in arid regions with dry soil conditions, a continuous moisture barrier that covers the natural or excavated ground surface within the perimeter enclosure of the home must be installed.</p> <p>Provisions should also be made to prevent water from entering the crawl space and for the control and diversion of surface water away from the manufactured home.</p>

d. Inspections

For units processed as proposed construction, first and final inspections are required. (If covered by a 10-year insured warranty program, only a final inspection is required.)

## XII. Specially Adapted Housing Compliance Inspection Process:

1. VA assigns a VA compliance inspector to perform inspections on both new construction and remodeling jobs for veterans who are eligible for Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grants from VA. **VA will reimburse you directly for these inspections.** The builder or remodeling contractor is responsible for paying your fee if deficiencies are noted in the report and re-inspection is required.
2. **When the assignment is made, you will receive a cover letter, a blank invoice, copies of the plans and specs or construction exhibits, and a copy of the draw schedule for remodeling projects.** When the grant is used for the purchase of a new home, the inspection is the same as you perform on any new construction job. VA requires three full inspections by a VA compliance inspector on these projects.
3. The inspections required for remodeling vary, depending on the size of the job and draw schedule arranged with the contractor. VA will not advance funds to a contractor but may in some cases provide funds for materials provided they are on site at the time of the inspection. The details of the job should be clear on the draw schedule (or escrow agreement) that you receive from VA. If you have any questions, you should contact the Specially Adapted Housing agent who made the inspection assignment to you.
4. **Because we are disbursing funds on these remodeling contracts, it is important that you state in the inspection report the specific scope of work that was inspected.** It is not sufficient to only mark “First”, “Second”, “Third”, “Reinspection”, or “Special” in section 1 of VA form 26-1839, VA Compliance Inspection Report. **We need a clear description of the work inspected as it corresponds with the draw schedule** so that we do not mistakenly advance funds for work that has not been completed. **You may reference the draw schedule in the description of work completed (i.e. “all work complete as described for draw number 2”).**
5. **All inspections made for SAH should be faxed or e-mailed to VA as soon as possible** after the inspection has been completed (not to exceed 24 hours), to be followed by mailing the full package. **You will not deliver “drop copies” of compliance inspection reports to the builder except for failed inspections.**
6. There may be changes during the course of remodeling, to the draw schedule or escrow agreement. When this occurs, you will be notified in writing by VA. You should never perform a partial inspection based on information you receive from the contractor.
7. We understand that these are often more complex inspections than you may generally perform, and we appreciate your service to us and our veterans.
8. Appendix A contains detailed Minimum Property Requirements for Specially Adapted Housing Grants.

**Appendix A:****MINIMUM PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANTS**

1. Minimum property requirements are absolute conditions under the governing law for the housing grant.
2. Were developed by the experience and knowledge of experts who have gained an understanding of the residential needs of veterans confined, or largely confined, to wheelchairs.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

*Each veteran has individual needs and it is the SAH Agent's responsibility to research and be considerate of those needs. Some variations of the MPRs may be allowable with a properly approved waiver by the VA.*

**RAMPS AND WALKWAYS**

Most homes must have two ramps and/or walkways that are:

- Suitable for ingress and egress, and
- are at opposite ends of the home.

At least one of the two ramps must:

- Be free wheeling needing no mechanical device to move the wheelchair between levels.
- Provide a direct means of emergency egress from the adaptive bedroom area, and
- Be clear of potential fire hazards.

Ramps and walkways must be:

- permanently installed
- Covered with adequate overhang for protection against inclement weather
- A minimum of 3 feet 6 inches for existing, and
- A minimum of 4 feet wide for new construction

## **RAMP, WALKWAY, AND DRIVEWAY**

### **Slope of ramp, walkway, and driveway**

- Must have a slope of 8% or less. The calculation for an 8% slope is: 1 inch of rise (height) that must be 12.00 inches of run (length).

### **Lifts and Elevators**

- If a mechanical device is needed to move the wheelchair from one of level to another, a battery or generator back-up unit must be installed.

### **Treatment of Walkways and Ramps**

- Non-slip finish will include, but is not limited to:
  - \* broom finished of concrete surfaces
  - \* built in electric coils - ¼ inch spacing between decking boards, and
  - \* Metal grating.

## **RAMP AND WALKWAY CURBS AND GUARDS**

The ramp or walkway must have curbs or guards if a hand rail is installed.

### **The curbs must be**

- on both sides of the ramp or walkway
- a maximum height of 5 inches
- Have weep holes for drainage

### **The guards must be**

- A maximum height of 5 inches, and
- A minimum of 1 inch drainage space between the ramp/walkway deck and the bottom edge of the guard.

## **CONNECTING WALKWAYS AND RAMPS TO GARAGES AND CARPORTS**

Walkways and ramps must

- Be installed if the garage or carport is detached from the home, and
- Be covered to protect the veteran from exposure to inclement weather.

## **RAMP AND WALKWAY HANDRAILS**

The ramp or walkway must have a handrail if a hazard is observed. The handrail must

- Be installed on both sides of the ramp or walkway
- Be a height of 2 feet 6 inches to 2 feet 8 inches.
- Have a hand grip of 1 ½ inches to 2 inch diameter.
- Be a minimum of 1 ½ inch to maximum of 2 inch clearance from any mounting surface.
- Be smooth, continuous and uninterrupted in the vertical or horizontal plane
- Be turned down or turned into the parallel wall to avoid dangerous projections, and
- Extend a minimum of 1 foot beyond the end of any stairway or ramp ending.

## **RAMP AND WALKWAY PLATFORMS**

Ramp and walkway platforms must

- Be provided at all wheelchair entrances
- Be equal in height to the house floor level at wheelchair entrances
- Be a minimum of 5 foot by 5 foot in size
- Be constructed of non-slip materials
- Be provided every 30 feet of the ramp or walkway
- Be reasonably level with a maximum slope of 1/8 inch per foot for drainage
- Have a clear area of 1 foot 6 inches of width beside the door entrance opposite the hinge, and
- Be unobstructed.

## **GARAGE AND CARPORT**

### **A garage or carport must**

- Have a minimum overhead door/opening height of 7 feet for existing structures
- Have a minimum overhead door/opening height of 8 feet for proposed construction
- Be a minimum of 14 feet 6 inches wide and 24 feet long for single-car garage or carport
- Be a minimum of 24 feet wide and 24 feet long for double-car garage or carport

### **The width of the garage and carport must**

- Include a minimum of 5 foot, unrestricted wheelchair maneuverability on at least one side of the vehicle, and
- Allow ample space for the veteran to park a specially equipped vehicle(s) and to provide access to the vehicle, as necessary.

## **DOORWAYS**

All doorways, including patio doors, that are wheelchair ingress/egress passageways must

- Be a minimum of 36 inches wide
- Be easy open

**Note: A patio door must be the minimum width of 7 feet wide to accommodate the 36 inch opening.**

- If a threshold is installed, it must be beveled and have a maximum height of ½ inch, and
- If there is a mailbox and/or a door bell installed, they must be mounted at a height not less than 3 feet and not more than 3 feet 9 inches.

A variation to the width of the doorway requirement is

- The minimum width of 32 inches is allowable if it is not feasible to widen the doorway to 36 inches width.

**Note: Ingress/egress doorways to wheelchair ramps or walkways must always be a minimum of 36 inches wide with no allowable variation.**

## **HALLWAYS**

Hallways must have a minimum width of 48 inches. If the minimum width is not feasible to obtain, then a variation of width of 42 inches may be allowed with a waiver.

Turns from the hallway into any rooms, including bedrooms and/or bathrooms, must have sufficient space for safe unobstructed maneuvering of the wheelchair.

## **BATHROOMS**

**NOTE: At least one bathroom must be conveniently located near the veteran's bedroom**

**Bathroom floor area must**

- Have a minimum 5 foot turn radius to provide for wheelchair maneuverability
- Have a minimum 4 foot clear area in front of all fixtures, and
- Have flooring that is non-slip under both wet and dry conditions

## **BATHROOM TOILETS**

**Toilets must have**

- A 3 foot unobstructed access to the side of the toilet for ease and safe transfer from the wheelchair.
- A 4 foot unobstructed area in front of the toilet for wheelchair access
- Armrests
- A suitable back support

**Toilets must have grab bars that are installed at the side and rear and must**

- Be a minimum of 1 ½ inch diameter, and
- Support a minimum dead weight of 250 lbs.
- Be at a minimum of 2 feet 8 inches or at a height that is convenient to the veteran's needs
- Be installed with a minimum of 1 ½ inches to a maximum of 2 inches of clearance from the inside of the bar to the mounting surface, and
- Extend the total length of the toilet plus extend 12 inches past the front of the toilet on the side wall.

## **BATHROOM VANITIES AND SINKS**

**NOTE:** In most cases, the sink is included as part of the vanity countertop. Pedestal or wall hanging sinks are allowed provided there is a minimum of a 4 foot unobstructed access to the fixture.

### **Vanities and sinks must**

- Be a minimum height of 2 feet 3 inches and a maximum height of 2 feet 10 inches
- Be a minimum depth of 2 feet and a maximum depth of 2 feet 3 inches
- Have a 3 foot wide knee space under the vanity and sink for wheelchair access
- Have a 4 foot unobstructed area in front of the vanity and/or sink to allow the veteran easy wheelchair access for personal hygiene needs
- Have rounded corners on vanities
- Have plumbing wrapped or covered to prevent the veteran from abrasions or burns upon contact, and
- Have a GFI (ground fault interrupter) electrical outlet located for easy access to the veteran while seated in the wheelchair.

## **BATHROOM MEDICINE CABINETS**

### **Medicine Cabinets must**

- Be installed at a height and location to allow easy access to the veteran while seated in the wheelchair, and
- Have adequate drawer and storage space for the veteran's personal hygiene equipment and supplies.

## **BATHROOM MIRRORS**

### **Bathroom mirrors must**

- Be lowered or tilted to accommodate a veteran while in the seated position, and
- Be at a maximum 3 foot height to the bottom edge of the mirror

## **BATHROOM PASSAGE DOORWAYS**

### **Passage doorways to the bathroom must**

- Have a minimum opening of 36 inches
- Be a pocket door or if a swinging door is installed, it must swing out of the bathroom, and

- Not obstruct wheelchair maneuvering when open.

## **BATHROOM ROLL-IN SHOWERS**

**If a roll-in shower for new and existing construction is built on site, it must have**

- A floor drain with a 2 inch diameter, and
- The floor drain installed at the rear of the shower stall

**Pre-manufactured roll-in shower stalls for new and existing construction must have**

- A floor drain with a minimum of 1 ½ inch diameter. Or
- A 2 inch floor drain must be installed if it is possible to install and/or an option of the manufacturer.

**Roll-in showers for new and existing construction must**

- Have non-slip flooring, and
- Cannot have a curb installed to separate the shower from the rest of the bathroom floor.
  - **A built-in bench is a veteran's option; it is not an MPR requirement.**

## **SHOWER HEAD**

**The shower head must be**

- Hand held, and
- On a sliding bar

## **WATER CONTROL LEVER**

**Water controls must**

- Be accessible from the wheelchair for water temperature control
- Be single lever, and
- Have thermostatic or pressure-balance control to avoid sudden changes in water temperature.

## **SHOWER GRAB BARS**

### **Grab bars must**

- Be installed on three walls of the shower
- Be a minimum of 1 ½ inch diameter
- Be installed approximately 2 feet 9 inches high or at a height that is convenient to the veteran's needs.
- Support a minimum dead weight of 250 lbs., and
- Be installed with a minimum of 1 ½ inches to a maximum of 2 inches of clearance from the inside of the bar to the mounting surface.

**NOTE: In some applications the veteran may request that a bar is vertically installed. This is an option of the veteran and is allowable if used in conjunction with the horizontal bar application.**

## **BATH TUB**

There must be a 4 foot clear unobstructed area to the side of the tub.

### **The bath tub transfer platform must be**

- The width of the tub and a minimum of 18 inches in length
- Installed at the rear of the tub, and
- Of a height that allows ease of transfer from the wheelchair.

### **Bath tub faucets must be**

- Accessible for water temperature control both, when in the wheelchair or immersed in the water, and
- Thermostatic or pressure-balance controlled to avoid sudden changes in water temperature.

## **BATH TUB GRAB BARS**

### **Grab bars must**

- Be installed on the rear and side walls of the tub
- Be a minimum of 1 ½ inch diameter
- Be installed at a height that is convenient to the veteran's needs
- Support a minimum dead weight of 250 lbs., and
- Be installed with a minimum of 1 ½ inches to a maximum of 2 inches of clearance from the inside of the bar to the mounting surface.

**NOTE: In some applications the veteran may request that a bar is vertically installed. This is an option of the veteran and is allocable if used in conjunction with the horizontal bar application.**

## KITCHENS

The kitchen arrangement must allow for adequate maneuvering room for the veteran. There must be a minimum clear unobstructed radius of 4 foot by 5 foot in the center of the work area for wheelchair maneuvering.

Electrical outlets must be located for easy access to the veteran while seated in the wheelchair.

Electrical switches for the following items must be installed on the face of the cabinets or conveniently placed for the veteran's use:

- Garbage disposal
- Vent fan
- Range hood, and
- Lights

## KITCHEN OVENS AND RANGES

### Ovens must

- Be installed at a level convenient for the individual veteran while seated in the wheelchair
- Include a built-in range with
  - \* Open space underneath for wheel chair access, and
  - \* Controls toward the front
- Controls toward the front

### A free standing range must

- Be located at the end of the row of cabinets, and
- Have front controls.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Each veteran has individual needs and the SAH Agent must research and be considerate of those needs. Some variations of MPRs are allowable with the proper waiver request.**

## **KITCHEN SINKS**

### **Kitchen Sinks must**

- Have a minimum of a 3 foot wide opening under the sink for wheelchair access
- Be a shallow depth so not to restrict the veteran's access with a wheelchair
- Separate disposal sink offset so the disposal will not restrict the veteran's access with a wheelchair
- Wrap or cover plumbing to protect the veteran from burns and abrasions

### **Faucets must**

- Be single-lever control, and
- Have hose and sprayer

## **KITCHEN APPLIANCES**

Special appliances to aid the veteran must be included in the kitchen, (i.e., dishwashers, food warmers. Microwaves, etc.)

### **Refrigerators must be**

- Double door, side-by-side refrigerator/freezer combination, and
- Located to allow for unobstructed access when the door of the refrigerator is open.