
COLORADO DIVISION OF HOUSING ADVANCES

Manufactured Housing

Built Better By Design

The Inspection System for Manufactured Homes

It can generally be acknowledged that a building code is only as good as the enforcement system that accompanies it. The manufactured home enforcement program required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a thorough and efficient system designed specifically for the factory production environment. Because the factory pace differs from that of the construction site, the manufactured home enforcement system is necessarily different, too. The goal in both cases, however, is the same to insure the highest degree of safety in the design and construction of the home.

Ideally, a building code should be backed up by uniform and consistent enforcement. The HUD enforcement system relies on a cooperative federal/state program to ensure compliance with Federal Manufactured Homes Construction and Safety Standards (the HUD Code). The Department of Housing and Urban Development enforces the HUD Code through its agent, the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards (NCSBCS). Uniformity and consistency can be maintained better in the HUD enforcement system because of two key factors. First, the inspections take place in the factory during each phase of construction, and follow behind the manufacturer's own in-plant inspection and quality assurance teams. This allows for more thoroughness, since time is spent inspecting homes rather than traveling to inspection sites. Efficiency is increased because travel time is limited and necessary paperwork is minimized. Second, consistency is maintained because fewer people inspect more homes. The enforcement procedure is much less susceptible to individual interpretations, as would be the case with on-site inspections in every jurisdiction across the country.

Inspection Starts Before Production Starts

The HUD enforcement system begins with oversight by Design Approval Primary Inspection Agency (DAPIA). The DAPIA (a third party inspection agency) must: approve the engineering design of the home; approve the manufacturer's quality assurance manual for its plant; and coordinate with the other third-party inspection agency, known as the IPIA. Since 1976, the Colorado Division of Housing (DOH) has participated in the HUD Manufactured Housing Program as a HUD approved Certification and Construction Inspection Agency (IPIA) for all homes built in Colorado in compliance with HUD Construction And Safety Standards. DOH has the responsibility to make sure the production facility programs and procedures are in accordance with the DAPIA approved quality assurance manual, and it conducts inspections of homes produced in the factory to assure conformance with the approved design.

Three interesting notes: 1) every home is inspected during at least one stage of production; 2) in the course of each plant visit, the IPIA shall make a complete inspection of every phase of production and every visible part of each home in production; and 3) when a new plant is opened by the manufacturer, the first home built according to approved plans is inspected 100% - every step in the building process

undergoes close scrutiny by the inspection agency. Along with this, NCSBCS inspection teams conduct representative inspections as a check on the performance of the third party inspection agents and the manufacturer. Keep in mind that all this is in addition to the inspections carried out by the manufacturer's own foremen and its quality assurance inspectors.

Certification Assures the Homebuyer

Before leaving the factory, each home must have a numbered certification label affixed to the exterior of each section of the home. This label certifies to the Homebuyer that the home has been inspected in accordance with the HUD enforcement procedures and that it complies with the HUD building code. Only when all inspection parties are satisfied that the home complies with the code will the certification label be affixed to the home. A consumer seeing the home for the first time will have the assurance that the home has been thoroughly tested and inspected from the design stage through final construction and found to be built according to the approved design.

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