



# Technical Reviews and Database Adjustments Guideline



**Version 2.4**

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## Technical Reviews and Database Adjustments

Multifamily property owners/agents (POAs) and Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) have the option to appeal a physical inspection score for reasons such as a belief that the inspection was not conducted in accordance with the Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspection protocol, that certain inspection data may have been recorded in error, or deficiencies are related to extraordinary events such as a natural disaster, that, if corrected/adjusted will result in an improvement in the property's overall score. There are two different processes available to appeal a physical inspection score: technical reviews and database adjustments.

### What is a Technical Review (TR)?

A technical review may be requested if, during the physical inspection, an objectively verifiable and *material error(s)* occurred that, if corrected, would result in an improvement in the property's overall score. Material errors are those that exhibit specific characteristics and meet specific thresholds. The three types of material errors are:

- **Building Data Errors** - The inspection includes the wrong building or a building that is not owned by the property.
- **Unit Count Errors** - The total number of units considered in scoring is incorrect as reported at the time of the inspection.
- **Non-Existent Deficiency Errors** - The inspection cites a deficiency that did not exist at the time of the inspection.

### What Does NOT Qualify for a Technical Review?

PIH-REAC will not consider the following for a technical review:

- disagreements over the severity of a defect, such as deficiencies rated Level 3 that the POA/PHA believe should be rated Level 1 or 2;
- deficiencies that were repaired or corrected during or after the inspection;
- deficiencies recorded with no associated point loss (for example, inoperable smoke detectors) or deficiencies for survey purposes only (for example, FHEO);
- deficiencies caused by residents.

### **What are the Steps for Submitting a Technical Review?**

A POA/PHA can initiate the technical review process by notifying PIH-REAC in writing within the appropriate time-period and supplying objective and verifiable documentation that a deficiency was recorded in error. Examples of objective and verifiable documentation are identifiable, dated pictures or video evidence; signed and dated written material from an objective source, such as a local fire marshal or building code official or a licensed or registered architect or professional engineer with the authority to sign and seal or “stamp” documents, thus taking the legal responsibility for them, or other similar evidence that is specific to the inspectable area and item being challenged. The evidence must be more than a disagreement with the inspector’s observations, or the inspector’s finding regarding the severity of the deficiency.

As of October 31, 2007, appeals signed by the owner, his/her management agent and /or lawyers retained by the owners are the only acceptable appeals that will be processed.

REAC is not required to review a request for appeal after the specified number of days has expired so it is important to note the time-period available for appeal.

**Public Housing:** PHAs must submit a request for a technical review and must be received at REAC **within 30 days** from the physical inspection report release date. This change is effective for inspections released on or after March 25, 2011. The request must include an email address of the request originator.

**Multifamily:** POAs must submit a request for a technical review and must be received at REAC **within 30 days** from the physical inspection report release date. The request must include an email address of the request originator.

**The information and proper documentation for a technical review can be sent via email to REAC\_TAC@hud.gov or can be mailed to the following address:**

U.S Housing and Urban Development/PIH/REAC  
**Attn:** Technical Assistance Center/TR/DBA  
550 12th Street, S.W.  
Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20410

### **What Can Be Expected in Response to a request for a Technical Review?**

If the PIH-REAC evaluation determines that an objectively verifiable and material error(s) has been reasonably documented by the POA/PHA and, if corrected, would result in a significant improvement in the property's overall score, the PIH-REAC will take one or a combination of the following actions:

- Schedule a new inspection;
- Correct the physical inspection report;
- Issue a corrected physical condition score; or
- Issue a corrected Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) score.

An email will be sent to the originator of the request (a copy will be sent to the Primary Contact listed in the inspection report) explaining what action, if any, has occurred and why the technical review is accepted or denied. A technical review that changes a physical inspection score may change the PHAS score. The PHAS score is not considered final until all changes have been completed.

### **What is a Database Adjustment (DBA)?**

A request for database adjustment initiates a review of the results of a physical inspection. A database adjustment may be requested for circumstances affecting the inspected property that are out of the ordinary, reflect an inconsistency with ownership, or are allowed by city/county/state codes. Circumstances that may be addressed by a database adjustment are as follows:

- **Local Conditions and Exceptions** - Circumstances include inconsistencies between local code requirements and the UPCS inspection protocol, such as conditions permitted by local variance or license (e.g., child guards allowed on sleeping room windows by local building codes) or preexisting physical features that do not conform to or are inconsistent with PIH-REAC's physical condition protocol.
- **Ownership Issues** - Items that were captured and scored during the inspection that are not owned or the responsibility of the PHA/POA. Examples include sidewalks, roads, fences, retaining walls, and mailboxes owned and maintained by adjoining properties or the city/county/state and resident-owned appliances that are not maintained by the PHA/POA. The PHA/POA must have notified the owner or proper authorities regarding the deficient item and any appliances provided to the tenant must be noted in the lease agreement.
- **Adverse Conditions Beyond the Owner's Control** - Deficiencies negatively affecting the score were caused by circumstances beyond the PHA's/POA's control, such as damage caused by a natural disaster; a third party, private or public entity working near the property or caused damage to the property. The responsibility to correct such conditions still belongs to the POA/PHA and must show evidence of work completed or work physically in progress to complete repair.
- **Modernization Work in Progress** – Properties and developments undergoing extensive modernization work in progress may qualify for a database adjustment for observed deficiencies actively being worked on at the time of the inspection. Routine and/or remedial maintenance before or during the inspection are not appealable. All elements of the unit/area that are not physically undergoing modernization at the time of the inspection (even if modernization is planned) will be subject to PIH-REAC's physical inspection protocol without adjustment.

### **What Does NOT Qualify for a Database Adjustment?**

PIH-REAC will not consider the following for a database adjustment:

- Requests submitted without appropriate documentation;
- Deficiencies noted during the inspection that were corrected during or after the inspection;
- Circumstances addressed in the technical review process. Requests for technical reviews must be submitted separately from requests for database adjustments.

### **What are the Steps for Submitting a Database Adjustment?**

A POA/PHA can initiate the database adjustment process by notifying the correct office in writing within the appropriate time-period and submitting proper documentation (i.e., signed letter from local/ building/ fire code official for code variance; etc) to support the appeal. All requests for database adjustments can be made either prior to or after the physical inspection

**Public Housing:** PHAs must send a request for a database adjustment and must be received **within 45 days** from the physical inspection report release date to the local PIH **field office**. The local PIH field office will then review the database adjustment request and forward their recommendation to PIH/REAC. This change is effective for inspections released on or after March 25, 2011. The request must include an email address of the request originator.

**Multifamily Housing:** POAs must send a request for a database adjustment and must be received **within 45 days** from the physical inspection report release date to the following address. The request must include an email address of the request originator and **can be sent via email to REAC\_TAC@hud.gov or can be mailed to the following address.**

U.S Housing and Urban Development/PIH/REAC  
**Attn:** Technical Assistance Center/TR/DBA  
550 12th Street S.W.  
Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20410

### **What Can Be Expected in Response to a request for Database Adjustment?**

If the PIH-REAC evaluation determines that the request is justified and, if corrected, would result in a significant improvement in the property's overall score, the PIH-REAC will take one or a combination of the following actions:

- Schedule a new inspection;
- Correct the physical inspection report;
- Issue a corrected physical condition score; or
- Issue a corrected Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) score.

An email will be sent to the originator of the request (a copy will be sent to the Primary Contact listed in the inspection report) explaining what action, if any, has occurred and



why the database adjustment request is accepted or denied. A database adjustment request that changes a physical inspection score may change the PHAS score. The PHAS score is not considered final until all changes have been completed.

**Examples of Appealed Items and Appropriate Documentation**

*Shown below are examples of appealed items and supporting documentation that is and is not acceptable:*

<b>Examples of observed deficiency</b>	<b>Objective and Verifiable Documentation</b>	<b>Documentation not considered objective and/or verifiable*</b>
(TR) Building Exterior -Foundations Cracks/Gaps	A signed letter from a licensed professional structural engineer with his/her seal stating that the deficiency does not exist.	Letter from the PHA or the MF Owner/Agent saying the wall is sound and safe. Letter from a general contractor/individual who is not licensed to give such opinion.
(TR) Site Grounds - Overgrown, Penetrating Vegetation	A dated picture or video showing the whole site that overgrown vegetation does not exist immediately prior to or on the inspection date	A video or picture without a date/time stamp. A letter from the PHA/Property Owner/Agent saying the vegetation is not overgrown. A time stamped video or picture showing vegetation touching the building or growing over a walkway, etc. - the inspector's judgment will prevail.
(TR) Any inspectable area – Infestation/Presence of Roaches	NA	A pest control contract will not suffice to approve a TR. The inspector’s judgment will prevail.
(TR) Site - Graffiti	A picture/video of the permanent art with a copy of the executed contract between the PHA/POA and the artist with a date prior to the inspection or a newspaper article showing the artwork/mural done as a community project. A picture of temporary chalking such as hopscotch marks dated on or within very few days after the inspection clearly identifying the area with the noted deficiency.	A letter from the PHA/POA that says it allows children to mark on the walls. Although a TR can be approved for chalk hopscotch marks on a driveway/walkway; crayon and other permanent markings on a wall, building surface, or fence cannot be approved unless they are part of a permanent piece of artwork/art mural.

(TR) Common Area or Dwelling Unit Doors - Deteriorated/Missing Seals (Entry Only)	A manufacturer's guide that states seals/weather stripping was never installed and a picture which clearly identifies the inspected door that matches the manufacturer's guide.	A letter from the PHA/Property Owner/Agent saying there were no seals on the door when it was purchased.
(TR) Building Systems - Leaking Central Water Supply (Domestic Water)	Signed letter from a licensed professional mechanical engineer with his/her seal stating that the deficiency does not exist.	A letter from the PHA/POA saying the leaking water was a result of condensation rather than a true leak.
(TR) Building Systems - Missing Sprinkler (Sprinkler components painted over)	An inspection report from a fire sprinkler company or local code official, dated on or immediately after the inspection, that clearly states the specific painted components (frame, thermal linkage, cap, deflector, or escutcheon) do not affect the effectiveness of the fire suppression system.	A letter from the PHA/POA saying they called the sprinkler company and the vendor said it was okay to paint the components.
(DBA) Site - Tripping Hazard (Sidewalk-ownership)	An executed agreement dated prior to the date of the inspection and with appropriate contact information, between the city and the property owner stating the city owns and is responsible for the sidewalks or a letter from the city claiming ownership. Additionally, there must be a letter from the PHA/POA dated prior to the inspection reflecting a request for the sidewalk to be repaired or a letter from the city with information regarding repair of the sidewalk with appropriate contact information.	Letter from the PHA or the MF POA saying the city owns the sidewalks.
(DBA) Common Area Office - All inspectable items (undergoing modernization work-in-progress)  Effective Date March 20, 2019	(1) an executed contract with a copy of the scope of work, including change orders if applicable; (2) a Notice to Proceed with start and completion dates; (3) an affidavit from the contractor's authorized representative identifying:	Letter from the PHA Mod Coordinator or the MF Owner saying the office is undergoing modernization.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the modernization work in progress that was being done at the time of the inspection;</li> <li>b. the identifiable location (e.g. inspectable area, Bldg. &amp; unit number) of the work physically in progress;</li> <li>c. the work it has completed as of the date of the affidavit;</li> <li>d. the date on which the work was completed; and</li> <li>e. if the work is not completed as of the date of the affidavit, an explanation of why the work is still in progress and when it will be completed; and</li> </ul> <p>(4) photographic evidence sufficient to show that the observed deficiencies have been corrected or are in the process of being corrected.</p> <p>Documents submitted from the contractor(s) must be on the contractor's letterhead and include the contractor's licensing and contact information.</p> <p><b>Only the observed deficiencies that were physically in the process of being corrected by modernization work in progress at the time of inspection are eligible for consideration.</b></p> <p>Modernization work to be performed under an executed contract but was not physically in progress at the time of the inspection is not eligible for a database adjustment.</p> <p>Before processing a database</p>	
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	adjustment, REAC may contact the contractor for additional information or visit the property to verify the information submitted in the appeal.	
(DBA) Dwelling Unit Emergency Fire Exits - Blocked/Unusable (Air Conditioner/Bars in the window)	A letter from the local Fire Marshall or licensed or registered professional engineer with the authority to sign and seal or “stamp” documents (thus taking the legal responsibility for them, or other similar evidence that is specific to the inspectable area and item being challenged. The evidence must be more than a disagreement with the inspector’s observations, or the inspector’s finding regarding the severity of the deficiency) stating that window air conditioners/bars in the window are allowed under the local fire code or that he/she or designee inspected the area in question and the cited deficiency does not pose any threat. Letter should include the reasoning for this decision such as the air conditioner is not bolted in and could be easily pushed through the window to provide emergency egress or the unit has a sprinkler system.	A letter from the PHA/Property Owner/Agent saying the local fire code allows window air conditioners. A letter from the PHA/POA or tenant saying the tenant requires the air conditioner.
(DBA) Site - Damaged/Leaning fence (ownership)	A signed letter from an owner/company with a contact number validating ownership of the cited fence or an approved building permit/plan reflecting current ownership.	Letter from the PHA or the MF Owner/Agent saying another person/company owns the fence. A photograph of the fence.

<p>(DBA) Dwelling Unit  – Damaged Hardware/  Locks/  Missing Door  (database adjustment)</p>	<p>A letter from tenant's doctor stating the mechanical door closer required adjustment to slow the closing of the door, the door needed to be removed, the lock needed to be removed, etc., to accommodate tenant's medical necessity/disability. Letters must be on appropriate letterhead with contact information. The appeal should include the work order documenting request for adjustment/removal of the door/door hardware, dated prior to the inspection.</p>	<p>A letter from the PHA/POA or tenant saying the elderly/disabled tenant needed the adjustment of door hardware or the door/door hardware removed.</p>
<p>(DBA) Missing Breakers/Fuses  (Electrical System – Building Systems)-  Non-Industry Standard Repair</p>	<p>A signed letter from a qualified local code official on an official letterhead noting the address of the property, the location of the panel or item in question, a copy of the photo taken by the REAC inspector at the time of inspection and stating that the panel or item in question has been inspected and meets local code.</p>	<p>A letter from an electrician stating the repair is 'per the local code. '</p>
<p>(TR) Missing Breakers/Fuses  (Electrical System – Building Systems)-  Non-Industry Standard Repair</p>	<p>A signed letter from a qualified local code official on an official letterhead noting the address of the property, the location of the panel or item in question, a copy of the photo taken by the REAC inspector at the time of inspection and stating that the panel or item in question has been inspected and meets local code.</p>	<p>A letter from an electrician stating the repair is 'per specs. '</p>

- Statements signed by residents or other personnel associated with the property are not

considered objective third-party sources

## Example of a technical review request

**Deficiency: BE - Roofs - Ponding\*\***



**Documentation not considered objective and/or verifiable:** Statement from the POA/PHA that it rained the day before the inspection

**Documentation considered objective and/or verifiable:** Picture showing the roof is flat and weather report showing measurable precipitation (1/10 inch or more) during the previous 48 hours

## Example of a database adjustment request

Adverse Conditions Beyond the Owner's Control

**(1) Deficiency: Missing Pieces/Holes/Spalling (Walls)**



**Documentation not considered objective and/or verifiable:** Statement from the POA/PHA that a car ran through the wall 2 days before the inspection

**Documentation considered objective and/or verifiable:** Picture(s) and a police report

## **Pre-database adjustment**

When an appeal with corresponding proper documentation wherein the deficiency captured conforms to the local code or pertains to ownership matters, the property ID is added to our “pre-database” list.

This means when the subsequent inspection noted deficiency that received points was granted on a previous appeal, that specific deficiency will be deleted prior to release of the new inspection report

### **View the Applicable Federal Register Notices/Regulations**

PIH-REAC has provided the database adjustment guidelines in the Federal Register notices for **24 CFR Part 200.857** and **24 CFR Part 902.24**. PIH-REAC has provided technical review guidelines in the Federal Register at **24 CFR Part 200.857** and **24 CFR Part 902.68**.