

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**ROANOKE REGIONAL LOAN CENTER**



**COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR  
GUIDE**

**August 2016 EDITION**

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Department of Veterans Affairs Fee Compliance Inspector Panel.

This Guide will help you to properly complete VA Compliance Inspection assignments and assist as a reference for other performance and conduct matters

Changes to this Guide will be posted on our VA Regional Loan Center webpage at:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/roanoke/>

We will advise you when there are changes you should obtain.

Our desire is that you help us provide the very best service possible to the veterans that we serve. To this end, we request that you display a courteous attitude and a high degree of professionalism with our other program participants.

When you experience difficulty in completing an inspection assignment or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

# CHAPTER 1 CONTACT INFORMATION

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

ROANOKE REGIONAL LOAN CENTER  
C&V - 262  
210 Franklin Road, SW  
Roanoke, Va. 24011

**800-933-5499, Option 3 for C&V, Option 5 for Specially Adapted Housing**

**TELEPHONE:** VETERANS ASSISTANCE (NATIONWIDE) (800) 827-1000

**WEBSITES:** VETERANS INFORMATION PORTAL <https://vip.vba.va.gov>

ROANOKE OFFICE: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/roanoke/>

### C&V STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:

**General Mailbox:** [cv.vbaroa@va.gov](mailto:cv.vbaroa@va.gov) for misc. correspondence

**FAX:** (215) 842-7217

<b>NAME</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>PHONE ext.</b>
KEVIN DIOMEDI	<a href="mailto:kevin.diomedi@va.gov">kevin.diomedi@va.gov</a>	Valuation Officer - 1505
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STEVEN UNDERWOOD	<a href="mailto:steven.underwood@va.gov">steven.underwood@va.gov</a>	Asst. Valuation Officer-1506

## **SAH Coordinators**

Ethel Skibinski	<a href="mailto:ethel.skibinski@va.gov">ethel.skibinski@va.gov</a>	(800) 933-5499 Ext. 1526
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Kevin Hollar	<a href="mailto:kevin.hollar@va.gov">kevin.hollar@va.gov</a>	(800) 933-5499 Ext. 1657

## **SAH Escrow**

Vickie Kibler	<a href="mailto:vickie.kibler@va.gov">vickie.kibler@va.gov</a>	(800) 933-5499 Ext. 1658
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## **SAH Agents**

### **Maryland**

James Jenkins	<a href="mailto:james.jenkins1@va.gov">james.jenkins1@va.gov</a>	(540) 815-1337
Denise Walters	<a href="mailto:paula.walters@va.gov">paula.walters@va.gov</a>	(410) 230-4500 Ext. 2030
Winfield Willis	<a href="mailto:winfield.willis@va.gov">winfield.willis@va.gov</a>	(410) 645-8082 Ext. 2092

### **DC and N Virginia**

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### **Kentucky**

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Chuck Parker	<a href="mailto:charles.parker.jr@va.gov">charles.parker.jr@va.gov</a>	(502) 566-4484

### **Virginia (Central and Western)**

Mike Sigmon	<a href="mailto:michael.sigmon@va.gov">michael.sigmon@va.gov</a>	(800) 933-5499 Ext. 1536
Martha Minter	<a href="mailto:martha.minter@va.gov">martha.minter@va.gov</a>	(800) 933-5499 Ext. 1662

### **Virginia (Richmond)**

Ed Hall	<a href="mailto:edward.hall@va.gov">edward.hall@va.gov</a>	(540) 815-1331 (Cell)
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### **Virginia (Tidewater Area)**

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Faith Acker	<a href="mailto:faith.acker@va.gov">faith.acker@va.gov</a>	(540)597-1533

### **West Virginia**

Charlie Makowski	<a href="mailto:charlie.makowski@va.gov">charlie.makowski@va.gov</a>	(304) 399-9251
Mark Winans	<a href="mailto:mark.winans@va.gov">mark.winans@va.gov</a>	(304) 399-9482

## CHAPTER 2 INSPECTION FEES and PAYMENT

### Fees and Payment Issues

#### ◆ Fee Schedule

Compliance Inspection Fees:

Footing inspection (Prior to the placement of concrete)	<b>\$150</b>
Slab inspection (Prior to the placement of concrete)	<b>\$150</b>
Framing inspection (Prior to installation of insulation and drywall)	<b>\$200</b>
Final Inspection (After all construction related work is complete)	<b>\$200</b>
Draw Inspections and follow up inspections for compliance	<b>\$150</b>

Inspectors will be allowed to charge for miles traveled over 40 miles round trip for an assignment.

The allowable rate is set by General Services Administration (GSA) and will be the currently posted rate for Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) Mileage Reimbursement Rates on the GSA website at

[http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?P=MTT&contentId=9646&contentType=GSA\\_BASIC](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?P=MTT&contentId=9646&contentType=GSA_BASIC)

The amount that is reimbursable would be the rate for an automobile shown in the block labeled "If no Government Owned Vehicle available".

You are responsible for all other expenses associated with the preparation, completion and transmittal of all reports.

Submit invoices, GSA screen and mileage breakdown (i.e. MapQuest) with your completed compliance inspection report.

Invoices must include the Tax ID number or SSN you used on the direct deposit form. If you are not sure of the number, please check with the SAH Agent.

## CHAPTER 3 ACCESSIBILITY and AVAILABILITY

### Inspector Availability and Communication

You should be available during normal business hours and respond promptly to any inquiries you receive (by phone, fax, or e-mail) from VA staff or builders. Generally, your response should be made no later than the following business day.

#### ◆ **E-Mail**

We strongly recommend that you have an e-mail address. Most are now using email as the primary means of requesting inspections and for other communications with the fee inspector.

#### ◆ **Phone/Fax**

A fax machine, or access to a fax machine, is required.

A telephone answering machine, voice mail system, or someone to answer your telephone during normal business hours (typically 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) Monday through Friday is required.

Change your telephone voice message when you are unavailable. Your message should direct the caller to contact our office.

#### ◆ **Unavailability**

Notify us via fax or email to stop assignments and include the dates you are unavailable. Notify us of any inspection(s) still pending so we can reassign them to another inspector.

*Note: We may reassign a case if we are unable to reach you to determine the status. We will leave you notice when we do this.*

## CHAPTER 4 CONDUCT and CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### General Conduct

As a Compliance Inspector, you are considered as acting on behalf of the VA. Courteous, professional conduct is expected. Therefore, be mindful of your attitude and the remarks you make while performing your inspection work.

### Representing VA

Contact us first to obtain permission to speak to anyone or any group *in an official capacity* representing VA in regard to VA regulations, procedures, or policies.

### Property Inspections

You must do the compliance inspection and provide the information contained in the report. Neither task can be delegated by you to someone else.

### VA Certification Regarding Conflicts

We require that you annually certify (via VA Form 26-6684) that either you have no outside conflicts of interest, or (if you do) what they are. Note that *although you may have an outside conflict of interest, this in itself does not eliminate you from VA Inspection assignments*. This does mean that you should have a case reassigned when a conflict arises! See VA policy below.

### Conflict of Interest - VA Policy

The following statement of VA policy provides some examples of conflict of interest as well as other guidelines for fee personnel:

*It is neither the desire nor the intent of VA to interfere in the private lives of Fee Appraisers or Compliance Inspectors or to infringe upon their personal liberties. It is appropriate, however, for VA to require that persons serving as Fee Appraisers and Compliance Inspectors do not engage in private pursuits that conflict with their duties on behalf of the VA. Except as may be otherwise expressly authorized by VA regulations, instructions, or directives, VA requires that, as a condition for appointment and retention on rosters of designated or approved Fee Appraisers and Compliance Inspectors, any particular individual serving in such capacities shall not engage in any private pursuits where there may or will be:*

- *Any connection established that might result in a conflict between the private interests of the Compliance Inspector and his/her duties and responsibilities to VA and Veterans.*
- *Any circumstances wherein information obtained from or through a VA assignment to make compliance inspections will be used to the detriment of the Government or veterans.*



Specifically, the foregoing statements of policy and the standards contained therein are intended to preclude any Compliance Inspector from:

- *Selling land to a builder or sponsor and then making a compliance inspection of a dwelling unit purchased by a Veteran with guaranteed, insured, or direct loan.*
- *Owning an interest in, being employed by, or operating an architectural, engineering or land planning firm which renders services to builders or sponsors and later accepting an assignment from VA to inspect dwelling units built or to be built by a particular builder or sponsor for whom architectural, engineering, or land planning services have been rendered by the firm in which the Fee Appraiser or Compliance Inspector has employment or an interest.*
- *Inspecting dwelling units on VA assignments and later accepting exclusive selling rights for the homes.*
- *Inspecting properties for builders or sponsors who are purchasing hazard insurance or title services with respect to those properties from a company in which the Fee Appraiser or Compliance Inspector has an interest.*
- *Owning an interest in a project developed by a builder and accepting VA inspection assignments in another area which the same builder owns, is building, or is handling as real estate broker.*
- *Having an interest in or representing building supply firms and accepting VA assignments on dwelling units built by builders or sponsors who deal extensively with such supply firms.*
- *Accepting a VA assignment to inspect property if the fee is contingent upon supporting a predetermined conclusion.*

The above examples are not all-inclusive, but they do illustrate some obvious conflicts of interest. The provisions above do allow you to act as sales agent or broker in connection with a particular property, but if you receive an inspection request related to VA financing on that property, then you should immediately request a reassignment.

- **Notify us if you are elected or appointed to public office, or if affiliated with any new lender, builder, or realty firm.**
- **Request reassignment for a VA inspection on any property in which you have an actual or possible conflict of interest.**

## CHAPTER 5

# ASSIGNMENTS and INSPECTION REQUESTS

### The Assignment Process

The Specially Adapted Housing Agent will assign a compliance inspector when the SAH or SHA grant has been approved.

You will receive an assignment letter which will provide the name, address and phone number of the veteran and builder on the project.

You will receive a copy of the contract and plans and specifications for each project, as well as a copy of the draw schedule which will advise you of the work is to be completed at each staged inspection.

Construction Exhibits you should receive include:

- Specifications. VA Form 26-1852 (Description of materials) or other suitable format is acceptable. Specifications must be signed by the builder and the veteran.
- Plot Plan. Includes well/septic locations when applicable.
- Building Plans. Must show all exterior elevations, foundation/basement plan, all floor plans and sectional wall details.
- MPR Waivers.

Contact the SAH Agent if you are missing anything, and avoid any inspection work until you have a complete and accurate exhibit set.

### Inspection Requests

Verify as necessary the inspection being requested (Stage, Re-inspection, or Special).

When re-inspecting, there may be a request to amend the construction *exhibits* in lieu of an attempt to correct the actual construction. If so, then also review for any VA approved change request order(s). Only changes approved by VA will be accepted.

### Inspection Timeliness

Inspections should be completed within 3 business days of receipt of the inspection request. Document any delays due to circumstances beyond your control.

**NOTE: All re-inspection fees are paid by the Contractor**

# CHAPTER 6

## INSPECTION REPORTS and CHANGE REQUESTS

### Report Form and Source

Use VA Form 26-1839 (Compliance Inspection Report). See example SAMPLES at the end of this guide or to obtain, call a SAH Agent at this office (800-933-5499, Prompt 5).

### Use Your VA ID#

Put your VA ID# next to your name on all correspondence.

### Timeliness Information

Compliance Inspection reports must include the Date and Mailed Date on the Report.

### Report Requirements

Provide a report for each required inspection. Include the PH or AH case number at the top, and builder information.

#### ◆ Section 1

Indicate which inspection you are doing and then the condition of construction (A, B, C, D, E, other).

- Condition “A” applies when work has properly progressed.
- Condition “B” applies when you find variations or deviations from the plans or SAH MPR’s. Report all differences in the comments section.
- Condition “C” applies when you determine that the builder will correct any unapproved variations or deviations. Also check either the box marked “Above Items Will Be Inspected at Next Regular Inspection” or “Reinspection required”.
- Condition “D” applies when the builder indicates an unwillingness or inability to correct or complete the non-compliance items.
- Condition “E” applies only for third stage or later inspections. Usually the remaining items are delayed by weather.

#### ◆ Section 2

Complete this section when making a regular third stage inspection. Conditions A, B, C, D and E apply as described for Section 1 above. If work is incomplete or unsatisfactory then check the “re-inspection required” box.

#### ◆ Section 3

Report your findings based on a - requirement from a previous report. Check the boxes to show which previous inspection is applicable, and the current condition (A, B, C, D or E) as described for Section 1 above.

If the areas needing re-inspection have been concealed, then defer until the areas have been uncovered.

◆ **Section 4**

When Condition “E” has been checked under Section 1 or 3 enter an estimate of the cost to complete the remaining *onsite* work, and estimated date of completion.

◆ **Section 5**

Sign/date all reports. Note that the certification avoids any reference to *final* acceptance and approval, since additional stage inspections or re-inspections may be needed.

◆ **Section 6**

- This includes a Third Stage/Final Inspection report where the installation of appliances and floor coverings will be delayed until as late as just prior to loan closing. Floor coverings in bathrooms and any wood finish flooring must already be completed.

In Section 1, describe appliances and/or finish flooring to be installed. Include make/model (appliances) or brand and quality code number (flooring) as applicable.

In Section 6, check boxes “A” and “D” and countersign the report.

**Other Final Report Requirements**

- ◆ Report on any shortcomings, such as paint scratches, poorly fitting doors, stuck windows and wall cracks. Do this regardless of any arrangements made to do corrections.
- ◆ Report other problems such as inferior workmanship, faulty installation of or defective materials or equipment, any deviation(s) from the plans and specifications.
- ◆ When construction is acceptably complete, the final inspection report must include the following statement:

“ALL EQUIPMENT, FIXTURES, AND OBSERVABLE CONSTRUCTION  
ARE COMPLETE, SUITABLE AND READY FOR USE.”

Also, take two photographs (from the diagonally opposite front and rear corners) to record the appearance of the dwelling and indicate the grading and drainage of the site.

## **Report Distribution**

For Pre-Final Reports and any Final Reports which denote substitutions or deviations:

- Leave a copy of each report at the job site for the builder.
- Keep a copy for your records.
- Send the remaining copies to us.

For Final Reports with NO Substitutions or Deviations:

- Leave one copy with the builder (if lender not known, leave two copies)
- If lender known then forward a copy.
- Keep a copy for your records.
- Send the remaining copies to us *including the photographs (plus individual plot plan if applicable)*

If a revised report is prepared by the Regional Loan Center, copies will be distributed to the lender, the builder and yourself. In such cases the report will be marked "Superseded." We will maintain a file copy.

## **Construction Exhibit Changes**

### **◆ How a Change is Requested**

**Before the changes have been initiated, then:**

- Veteran must request any changes in writing
- The contractor must submit VA Form 26-1844 for approval, prior to changes being made.

### **◆ Change Request Form**

VA Form 26-1844 must be used to request the change. VA form 26-1844 must be signed and dated by the Veteran and the contractor. There are two exceptions:

Examples include substitution of water heater or furnace, hardware or bath fixtures, and relocation of outlets or windows.

### **◆ Approval of Changes *Not* Affecting Property Value**

VA must approve any request for deletions or changes in the certified Plans and Specifications. A copy of the "Approved" VA Form 26-1844 will be sent to the Compliance Inspector prior to inspection.

### **◆ Approval of Changes Which Affect Property Value**

We must approve any request for deletions or a change in value. We will issue an amended Notice of Value (NOV) and notify the lender or builder and (if applicable) the veteran.

## CHAPTER 7 VA ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

As you are our representative in the field, we are responsible for monitoring your *Performance* and *Conduct*.

### **Performance Oversight**

We monitor and record your Performance by doing:

#### ◆ **Desk Reviews**

All compliance inspection reports (VA Form 26-1839) are subject to review and modification by us.

We review to determine if:

- Any reported noncompliance items are correct, per the related “Approved” plans and specifications and VA MPR’s.
- Any “Substitutions or Deviations” as reported are (or are not) acceptable.
- The inspection report was completed and submitted in a timely manner

#### ◆ **Field Reviews**

VA SAH Agents will complete a final inspection at job completion. CI inspection reports are reviewed as follows:

- To the extent possible verify that the report describes the condition of the property or completion to approved plans and specifications
- Any deficiencies as noted were properly handled
- That the inspection report is otherwise acceptably completed

### **Negative Results**

We classify an unacceptable inspection report as having either a Negative Work Quality Finding or Negative Timeliness Finding.

### **Conduct Oversight**

We monitor and investigate when necessary for deficient service and inappropriate conduct.

Examples include:

- Improper or unprofessional conduct (behavior which leads to a negative or adverse impact on other VA program participants)

- Repeated complaint calls and/or letters from program participants.
- Substantive violation(s) of established VA policies or procedures.
- A series of Non-Substantive Negative Work Quality findings, which in the aggregate would establish a pattern of careless or negligent performance.
- Technical incompetence (reports which reflect insufficient knowledge of construction principles, techniques, and practices).
- Continued disregard for VA requirements after you have been properly instructed.

### **Disciplinary Action**

We implement disciplinary action as the circumstances dictate, with the intent of promoting correction of the deficiency or behavior. A *continuing pattern* of the same problem will call for a higher (more severe) level of action by us.

Possibilities include the following:

- **Written Admonishment:** A letter we send you which indicates the deficiency and (if necessary) the corrective measure(s) to take. The deficiency may be either an error in the report, or a “late” report, or both.
- **Counseling:** We conduct an informal meeting with you to discuss the problem(s). The focus is on resolving the problem(s), and *expectations*, rather than additional disciplinary action. Counseling is not disciplinary action per se, but is mentioned because it may be part of a process to initiate subsequent (more serious) disciplinary action later on.
- **Limited Denial of Participation (LDP):** We remove you from participation as a VA inspector (i.e. no assignments) for up to one year. An LDP applies only to our jurisdiction, but HUD and other agencies are notified and may reciprocate.
- **Debarment and Suspension:** We remove you from participation in all Federal nonprocurement programs, or as specified.

Suspensions may last up to 18 months. Debarment may last for three years.

If an LDP, Debarment or Suspension is being considered, *you are entitled to a hearing (with representation) to present evidence as to why it should be removed.*

## Appendix A. Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Minimum Property Requirements and Recommended Adaptations

### Overview

**In this Chapter** This chapter contains the following topics.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Topic Name</b>	<b>See Page</b>
1	General Information about SAH Minimum Property Requirements	A-2
2	SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Ingress and Egress Requirements	A-5
3	SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Primary Bathroom Requirements	A-9
4	SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Primary Bedroom/Sleeping Area Requirements	A-11
5	Minimum Property Requirements for Condominiums and Townhouses	A-12
6	General Information about SAH Recommended Adaptations	A-14
7	SAH Recommended Adaptations	A-18
8	Special Equipment	A-23
9	Recommended Adaptations for Burn Injuries and Respiratory Related Injuries	A-24

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## 1. General Information about SAH Minimum Property Requirements

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Definition** Minimum Property Requirements (MPRs) are absolute conditions specified under governing law for the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant.

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**b. Statutory Requirement** 38 United States Code (U.S.C.), Chapter 21 or 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 36.4401 through 36.4410 mandates that any housing unit acquired, constructed, or remodeled using proceeds from the SAH grant program must:

- comply with the MPRs, and
- include features necessary to accommodate the Veteran's disabilities.

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**c. Required Areas** In order to obtain grant approval, the following areas must satisfy the MPRs detailed in Appendix A:

- points of ingress and egress,
- primary bathroom, and
- primary bedroom/sleeping area

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**d. Exception** Adherence to MPRs is excused when compliance is not feasible and the Veteran requests an MPR waiver that is approved by the Regional Loan Center (RLC).

There is a need for flexibility and the exercise of judgment based on the physical abilities and limitations of each Veteran. In some instances, the nature of a Veteran's condition may obviate the necessity for a specific MPR. In these limited situations, the Regional Loan Center (RLC) may approve an MPR waiver request from the Veteran.

**Note:** Because MPRs are limited to three specific areas, MPR waivers should be the exception, not the norm. Moreover, MPR waivers should be based on feasibility and need, not personal preference.

**Reference:** For more information about MPR waivers, see Chapter 5, Section 3, Proposed Adaptations and Waivers.

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## 1. General Information about SAH Minimum Property Requirements, continued

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**e. Example 1**

**Situation:** A Veteran is in the advanced stages of multiple sclerosis and is primarily bed ridden. The only bathroom feature the Veteran is able to use is the shower and this is done so with the assistance of a caregiver.

**Result:** Because the only bathroom feature the Veteran is able to use is the shower, there is no need to adapt the sink and toilet in the primary adapted bathroom. The Veteran may request a waiver for these features for consideration by the RLC. However, the other MPRs in the primary, adapted bathroom, such as the roll-in shower, accessible floor area, and 36-inch wide entry door, must remain as part of the project and be improved upon as necessary. For example, MPRs only require a 5-foot turning area and a 4-foot by 4-foot roll-in shower, but it may be more helpful to the Veteran and caregiver to have a 6-foot turning area and a 5-foot by 8-foot roll-in shower to accommodate the partially reclined wheelchair used to transport the Veteran.

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**f. Example 2**

**Situation:** During the planning phase, a Veteran has decided that he/she does not want a primary, adapted bathroom that meets the MPRs detailed in Appendix A, Section 3. The Veteran has indicated that the current bathroom meets his/her current needs. Because the housing unit to be adapted is located in an area with significant snowfall, the Veteran wants to use the grant funds to construct an attached garage with a vertical platform lift to provide a covered means of ingress/egress. The garage would meet the specifications described in the recommended adaptations (RAs) in Appendix A, Section 7.

**Result:** While it would be very beneficial to use grant funds to provide a covered means of ingress/egress for the Veteran, it is not acceptable to waive the primary, adapted bathroom and other major MPRs simply because the Veteran does not want them. As instructed earlier in this section, MPR waivers should be based on need, not personal preference. The Veteran must be able to explain why the elimination of this MPR would provide a greater benefit to him/her than its inclusion. If the Veteran is unable to provide adequate justification, the appropriate course of action is to satisfy the MPRs first and then include RAs, like the attached garage, if there are additional grant funds available.

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## 1. General Information about SAH Minimum Property Requirements, continued

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**g. Example 3**

**Situation:** A Veteran and builder are in the final planning stages of the construction project. Based on the plans and scope of work the builder has developed, all of the SAH MPRs will be met except for the primary, adapted bedroom door. The builder has informed the Veteran that the hallway leading to the primary, adapted bedroom is only 38 inches wide and both of the hallway walls are load bearing. Therefore, it is not possible to widen the hallway, and the widest door opening the builder can provide for the primary, adapted bedroom is 34 inches.

**Result:** This situation addresses feasibility. Because it is not feasible, or possible, to widen the hallway in order to accommodate a 36-inch wide door to the primary, adapted bedroom, it is acceptable in this case for the RLC to approve the MPR waiver requested by the Veteran.

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## 2. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Ingress and Egress Requirements

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Number and Location** An adapted housing unit must have a minimum of two ingress and egress points that satisfy the MPRs presented in this section. The location and types of ingress and egress points are determined by the topography, floor plan, and Veteran preference. However, at a minimum, the two ingress and egress points must:

- provide a proximate means of emergency egress from the primary, adapted bedroom/sleeping area, and
- be located at different locations within the house.

It is preferable that the emergency egress location be directly from the primary, adapted bedroom/sleeping area. If this is not possible, the emergency egress must be proximate to the primary, adapted bedroom/sleeping area. It must also be free of potential fire hazards and not pass through, or originate in, an area prone to potential fire hazards such as the kitchen, garage, utility room, or any room containing a heat source.

Additional instructions regarding bedroom window egress requirements are provided in Appendix A, Section 4.

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**b. Doorway and Entrance Requirements** All doorways that are adapted ingress and egress routes must:

- have a minimum width of 36 inches, and
  - have a beveled threshold with a maximum height of ½ inch.
- 

**c. Types of Ingress and Egress** There are several types of ingress and egress that satisfy MPRs. They may be used interchangeably:

- no-step entry,
  - vertical platform lift (VPL),
  - elevator, or
  - ramp or walkway.
- 

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## 2. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Ingress and Egress Requirements, continued

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**d. No-step Entry**

A no-step entry may be sufficient when topography and grading eliminate the need for a ramp, lift or elevator (e.g. a housing unit built on slab). The no-step entry must meet the doorway and entrance requirements discussed earlier in this section.

For entries in which the difference between the exterior grade/elevation and the interior/finished floor elevation is less than 4 inches, a transition is acceptable and a 5-foot by 5-foot platform accompanied by a ramp is unnecessary. The transition must be:

- immobile,
  - constructed of a durable material other than wood,
  - provide unimpeded ingress/egress, and
  - complement the Veteran's condition and choice of wheelchair.
- 

**e. VPL**

A VPL is a mechanical device capable of providing a vertical means of ingress and egress in locations where ramps are not feasible due to topography or space constraints. The weight capacity and lift height vary by model and manufacturer; however, a VPL must:

- have a platform with a minimum usable width of 36 inches by 48 inches, and
  - be connected to a continuous power source such as a generator or battery back-up.
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## 2. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Ingress and Egress Requirements, continued

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### f. Elevator

Elevators, either internal or external, are also capable of providing a vertical means of ingress/egress. An elevator must have the following:

- a car with minimum interior dimensions of 48 inches by 48 inches,
- a 36-inch wide entry door/opening,
- a connection to a continuous power source such as a generator or battery back-up, and
- be equipped with a land line telephone to communicate with emergency personnel in case of entrapment caused by a power outage or mechanical failure.

**Note:** The Veteran should notify local emergency personnel, if applicable, of his/her dependence on an elevator as a means of ingress/egress. This is an added safety measure in the event of complete power/mechanical failure and loss of telephone connectivity.

---

### g. Ramps and Walkways

Ramps and walkways should be constructed of concrete, masonry, wood, metal, or composite materials and must:

- be permanently installed;
- have a minimum width of 42 inches (existing) or 48 inches (new); and
- be constructed in a manner that prevents slipping in wet or icy conditions (e.g. broom finish for concrete surfaces, ¼ inch spacing between deck boards, metal grating, or built-in heating coils).

For ramps or walkways that are more than 4 inches above grade and that cannot be constructed in a way to eliminate accidental falling, a low curb or guardrail on both sides with a minimum height of 5 inches is required.

**Note:** This requirement can usually be avoided by backfilling soil along the walkway to provide a reasonably level transition between the walkway and adjacent soil.

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*Continued on next page*

## 2. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Ingress and Egress Requirements, continued

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### g. Ramps and Walkways, continued

Ramps and walkways must also have:

- A slope of eight percent or less (i.e. for every 1 inch of rise there is 12.5 inches of run or more)
- A handrail that meets the following criteria:
  - installed at a height convenient to the Veteran,
  - minimum diameter of 1-1/2 inches,
  - clearance from mounting surface of 1-1/2 inches to 2 inches,
  - smooth continuous surface, and
  - installed on both sides of the ramp with a minimum of 42 inches of clearance between handrails.
- A platform that meets the following criteria:
  - located at any wheelchair entrance,
  - provided at every 30 feet or less of continuous ramp,
  - located at turns in the ramp greater than 45 degrees,
  - minimum size of 5 feet by 5 feet unhindered by handrails or gutters,
  - constructed of non-slip materials, and
  - have a reasonably level surface.

If the slope of the ramp/walkway is less than five percent, a handrail is not required. However, the ramp/walkway must have a low curb/guard rail on both sides with a minimum height of 5 inches if the ramp/walkway is more than 4 inches above grade. See the note above about using backfill to avoid this requirement.

**Important:** It is acceptable to use an existing modular ramp provided by Prosthetics and Sensory Aids as one of the approved ingress and egress points, as long as the condition of the ramp is deemed safe by the SAH Agent. However, new modular ramps must be permanently installed and meet the MPRs discussed in this section.

---

### 3. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Primary Bathroom Requirements

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. Number and Location** At a minimum, an adapted housing unit must have one fully adapted bathroom that satisfies the MPRs presented in this section. The primary, adapted bathroom must be in a location that is convenient and accessible for the Veteran.

---

**b. Required Features** The following features are required in an adapted bathroom:

- roll-in shower,
- accessible sink,
- accessible toilet,
- accessible floor area, and
- 36-inch wide entry door.

---

**c. Roll-in Shower** The roll-in shower must have the following features:

- minimum interior dimensions of 48 inches x 48 inches,
- a minimum opening of 36 inches,
- non-slip flooring with a coefficient of friction (COF) of 0.60 or greater,
- a maximum floor slope of ¼ inch to 12 inches (i.e. 1-inch slope from front to rear in a 48-inch deep roll-in shower),
- at least one grab bar per wall placed at a location convenient to the Veteran and capable of supporting the Veteran's weight,
- at least one hand held shower head, and
- accessible, thermostatic or pressure-balance controls to avoid sudden changes in water temperature.

---

**d. Accessible Sink** The adapted bathroom must be equipped with at least one roll-under, wall hung, or pedestal sink that is accessible. The width, height, and depth of the sink should be convenient for the Veteran. Any exposed pipes must be wrapped, or covered, in case of accidental contact by the Veteran.

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*Continued on next page*



### 3. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Primary Bathroom Requirements, continued

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**e. Accessible Toilet**

Toilets must have:

- a 48-inch clear front transfer space or a 36-inch clear side transfer space, and
- a minimum of one grab bar installed at a location that is convenient to the Veteran.

**Note:** Although only one grab bar is required at the toilet, the Veteran should be encouraged to install as many as needed. The height and type of toilet should be determined by the Veteran.

---

**f. Accessible Floor Area**

Floor areas must:

- allow at least one clear area for maneuvering with a minimum diameter of 5 feet (the turning area may extend into the roll-in shower), and
  - be non-slip in both wet and dry conditions with a COF of 0.60 or greater.
- 

**g. Entry Door**

Entry doors to the adapted bathroom must:

- have a minimum opening of 36 inches,
  - not intrude on the accessible floor area (i.e. doors must swing outward or slide, such as a pocket door), and
  - not obstruct wheelchair maneuvering when open.
-

## 4. SAH Minimum Property Requirements: Primary Bedroom/Sleeping Area Requirements

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. Number and Location** At a minimum, an adapted housing unit must have one adapted bedroom/sleeping area that satisfies the MPRs presented in this section.

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**b. Required Features** The following features are required in an adapted bedroom/sleeping area:

- 36-inch wide entry door,
- sufficient space for maneuvering,
- accessible flooring, and
- proximate emergency egress.

---

**c. Entry Doors** Entry doors to the primary adapted bedroom/sleeping area must:

- have a minimum opening of 36 inches, and
- not obstruct wheelchair maneuvering when open.

---

**d. Sufficient Space** The primary adapted bedroom/sleeping area must be sufficient enough in size to accommodate furniture while allowing the Veteran freedom of movement.

---

**e. Flooring** The flooring type must:

- not impede wheelchair maneuverability, and
- be low pile, closely woven and padded with a durable fiber type, if carpeted.

---

**f. Emergency Egress** As previously discussed, the primary adapted bedroom/sleeping area must, whenever possible, be equipped with an emergency egress point. If this is not possible, and the emergency egress point is proximate rather than direct, the primary adapted bedroom/sleeping area must have a window of sufficient size to allow access by emergency personnel. Local building code requirements should be consulted to establish acceptable design parameters.

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## 5. Minimum Property Requirements for Condominiums and Townhouses

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. Introduction** This topic contains information about condominium and townhouse requirements, including:

- requirements for units above the first floor,
- ingress and egress,
- evacuations and safety considerations, and
- windows and balconies.

**Important:** Primary bathroom and bedroom/sleeping area MPRs apply to condominiums and townhouses as described in the previous section.

---

**b. Requirements for Units Located Above the First Floor**

If a Veteran resides in a condominium or townhouse, it is preferable that the unit be located on the first floor. However, if the unit is located above the first floor, the following areas must be addressed:

- ingress and egress,
  - emergency access,
  - windows, and
  - balconies.
- 

**c. Ingress and Egress**

At least one suitable means of access must be provided so the Veteran has a level ingress and egress point from the condominium or townhouse. In the absence of a level ingress/egress point, it may be necessary to utilize ramps, platforms, or elevators to eliminate any elevation difference between interior and exterior floor levels.

**Note:** Condominiums or townhouses located above the first floor only require a single SAH MPR compliant exit.

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## 5. Minimum Property Requirements for Condominiums and Townhouses, continued

**d. Windows** At least one window must be of sufficient size to allow access by emergency personnel. Local building code requirements should be consulted to establish acceptable design parameters.

**e. Balconies** Veterans should be encouraged to purchase a condominium or townhouse with balconies that are accessible to emergency personnel and the Veteran.

**f. Evacuations and Safety Considerations** The table below describes the evacuation and safety requirements:

Access	Requirement
Exterior Emergency Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The condominium or townhouse unit must be accessible using firefighting and evacuation equipment from the exterior of the unit.</li> <li>• The location of the Veteran’s condominium or townhouse unit must be registered with local emergency personnel.</li> </ul> <p>No unit may be located beyond the reach of the highest evacuation ladder system available to local emergency personnel. The SAH Agent must verify the capabilities of local emergency personnel servicing the Veteran’s property and upload supporting documentation in the system.</p>
Interior Emergency Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Veteran is completely bedridden, the condominium or townhouse unit must contain an externally mounted device (audible, visible, etc.) which aids emergency personnel in locating the Veteran.</li> <li>• The Veteran’s bedroom window must:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ be of sufficient size to allow access by emergency personnel, and</li> <li>○ have exterior markings to guide emergency personnel.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 6. General Information about SAH Recommended Adaptations

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. Definition** Recommended Adaptations (RAs) are suggested modifications above and beyond the MPRs. They are not required to obtain grant approval. RAs were developed over time by SAH program experts who have gained an understanding of the residential needs of Veterans eligible for the SAH grant.

---

**b. Reasonably Necessary Adaptations for SAH Cases** The following RAs, which are detailed in Appendix A, Sections 7, are considered reasonably necessary in SAH cases:

- doorways,
  - hallways,
  - garages, carports, and passageways,
  - driveways and exterior walkways,
  - bathrooms,
  - bedrooms,
  - kitchens,
  - maintenance free materials,
  - heating and air conditioning,
  - electrical equipment,
  - security and emergency equipment,
  - windows,
  - flooring materials, and
  - laundry room.
- 

**c. Flexibility and Exercise of Judgment** There is a need for flexibility and the exercise of judgment based on the physical capabilities and limitations of each Veteran. Equally important is the need to anticipate the Veteran's future needs. SAH Agents should assist the Veteran in using a modular approach to adapting the housing unit. That is, RAs should be chosen by the Veteran on an as needed, or as desired, basis once the MPRs have been satisfied. SAH Agents can contribute significantly to this process by merging awareness of the Veteran's capabilities and future needs with a thorough understanding of the RAs and their own past experience.

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## 6. General Information about SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### d. Waiver and Approval

Because RAs are not required for grant approval, a waiver process is not necessary. It is not a requirement that every RA be incorporated into the design of each room, or area, being adapted. Veterans have freedom of choice and may select individual features.

The specifications provided for each RA in this section are not absolute. However, they should be adhered to when possible as they represent adaptations that have been field tested. RLCs have flexibility in approving minor variations in the specifications provided in this section. A formal approval process is not required for minor variations in RAs. However, RLCs should exercise sound judgment in determining which variations are acceptable. If the variation is significant, RLCs should question whether it is appropriate to spend grant funds on the modification.

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### e. Limitations

Although the purpose of creating RAs is to introduce greater flexibility to the SAH Grant program, it is important to remember that grant funds must only be used for adaptations that benefit the Veteran. VA Central Office (CO) may consider exceptions to this rule if it is determined that the proposed adaptations are necessary for the Veteran's caregiver and will improve the Veteran's quality of life. The request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification for the adaptation. The RLC must submit this request along with a recommendation to CO for approval.

The list of RAs is substantial, but not all-inclusive. Therefore, if a Veteran desires an adaptation not included in Appendix A, Section 7, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification for the adaptation. The RLC must submit that request along with a recommendation to CO for approval.

**Important:** Grant funds must not be used to cure deferred maintenance.

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*Continued on the next page*

## 6. General Information about SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### f. Exceptions

It is the responsibility of the SAH Agent, Assistant Valuation Officer (AVO), or Valuation Officer (VO) to determine which RAs are best suited for the Veteran based on the initial interview and feasibility study. If an RA is deemed necessary by the SAH Agent, AVO, or VO, it must be elevated to a MPR status (a requirement for grant approval).

If the Veteran does not wish to comply with the new requirement, the Veteran must submit a signed waiver request, along with justification, to the RLC for approval by the Assistant Loan Guaranty Officer or Loan Guaranty Officer.

---

### g. Example 1

**Situation:** A Veteran's elderly spouse, who functions as the caregiver, prepares the Veteran's meals and washes the laundry. As part of the proposed adaptation project, the Veteran has requested new kitchen and laundry room appliances. The Veteran's condition requires a special diet which his spouse has difficulty preparing using the outdated kitchen. Moreover, the Veteran's condition creates a large volume of laundry and the Veteran's spouse has difficulty managing this volume with the older, top loading washer and dryer.

**Result:** In most cases, new kitchen and laundry room appliances would be unacceptable if they were not going to be used by the Veteran. However, in this case, an argument can be made that the Veteran will benefit directly from new kitchen appliances as they will be used to prepare meals required for his special diet. In addition, a new, elevated, front loading washer and dryer will assist the Veteran's elderly spouse in providing appropriate care in the form of clean linens and clothing for the Veteran's use. Assuming the MPRs will be satisfied and there are sufficient funds, the appropriate course of action is for the Veteran to submit a request for this exception to the RLC. The request must then be sent to CO for approval.

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*Continued on next page*

## 6. General Information about SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### h. Example 2

**Situation:** An SAH Agent recently received the plans, contract, scope of work, and cost breakdown for a proposed adaptation project. The builder has included carpet replacement and interior painting for two secondary bedrooms that the Veteran does not use and will not access.

**Result:** These items are considered to be deferred maintenance and are outside of the acceptable scope of work for an adapted housing project. However, the Veteran may elect to use personal funds to pay for these renovations. Preferably, a separate contract, to be managed outside of the adapted housing project, will be created for this work. If not, the RLC must clearly document the cost attributed to these renovations and the source of the funds.

---

### i. Example 3

**Situation:** A Veteran has requested a new, detached, one-car garage as part of the proposed adaptation project. The proposed dimensions are 12 feet by 18 feet, which are insufficient to store the Veteran's adapted van and allow for ingress/egress using the vehicle ramp. All other MPRs for the housing unit will be satisfied once the project is complete.

**Result:** Per the RAs in Appendix A, Section 7, the recommended size for a one car garage is 14 ½ feet by 24 feet. The proposed garage is a major deviation from the specifications for a one car garage and the RLC should not approve this portion of the project. Normally, a garage large enough to provide a covered means of ingress/egress for the Veteran would surely be beneficial. However, the proposed garage in this case is only large enough for car storage. Therefore, it is not appropriate to use grant funds for a portion of the project that does not result in a usable, adapted feature.

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## 7. SAH Recommended Adaptations

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Doorways and Hallways** To ensure freedom of movement and convenience throughout an adapted housing unit, the following doorway and hallway specifications are considered reasonable:

- New interior and exterior doorways that are a minimum of 36 inches wide
  - Existing interior doorways that are a minimum of 32 inches wide
  - Thresholds that are beveled with a maximum height of ½ inch
  - Provide protection from inclement weather at ingress and egress points using a stoop, canopy, or overhang
  - New hallways that are a minimum of 48 inches wide
  - Existing hallways that are a minimum 42 inches wide
- 

**b. Garages, Carports, and Passageways**

The following garage specifications are considered reasonable:

- A single-car garage or carport that is at least 14 ½ feet by 24 feet
- A double car garage or carport that is at least 24 feet by 24 feet
- The door height of an existing garage that is 7 feet
- The door height of a new garage that is 8 feet
- The width of the garage should be sufficient to include:
  - 5 feet of unrestricted, wheelchair maneuverability on at least one side of the vehicle, and
  - ample space to park specially equipped vehicles and operate a device, such as a mobile lift or vehicle ramp, that provides the Veteran with access to the vehicle.

If the garage or carport is detached, it is acceptable to install a connecting ramp/walkway that adheres to the ramp/walkway specifications outlined in the MPR section of Appendix A, Section 2. If possible, it should be covered to protect the Veteran from exposure to inclement weather.

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*Continued on next page*

## 7. SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### c. Driveways and Walkways

Hard surface driveways are considered to be a reasonable adaptation and should:

- Be constructed of a material that does not impede wheelchair maneuverability
- Be constructed in a manner that prevents slipping in wet or icy conditions (broom finish for concrete surfaces)
- Have a slope of 8 percent or less (i.e. for every 1 inch of rise there is 12 ½ inches of run or more)

In some cases, site topography will inhibit the ability to construct a driveway that meets the 8 percent slope requirement. In cases such as this, the driveway should:

- Terminate at a reasonably level parking pad of sufficient size to accommodate the Veteran's vehicle and ingress/egress from the vehicle
- Be equipped with a safety barrier, such as curb or speed hump, to prevent unintended access to the steeply sloping portion of the driveway

Installation of hard surface, non-egress walkways is also considered reasonable and the specifications outlined in Section 2 of this Appendix should be adhered to as closely as possible.

---

### d. Bathrooms

Most of the bathroom adaptations are contained in Section 3. In addition, the following adaptations are deemed reasonably necessary:

- An accessible medicine cabinet placed at a convenient height
- A mirror placed at a height that provides adequate visibility
- Cabinets with pull-out shelving and/or sliding doors
- Closets with accessible shelving
- Single-lever faucets
- Additional grab bars
- Built-in or folding shower benches
- Comfort height toilets with a bidet seat or a separate bidet unit
- Accessible tubs with:
  - a transfer platform,
  - an accessible, single lever faucet that is thermostatic or pressure-balance controlled to prevent sudden water temperature changes,
  - grab bars in convenient locations, and
  - sufficient clearance to allow for unobstructed access.

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*Continued on next page*

## 7. SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### e. Bedrooms

Reasonably necessary bedroom adaptations include:

- One clear area for maneuvering with a minimum diameter of 5 feet
  - A minimum 4-foot clear access area in front of the closet
  - A clear space of 4 feet between the end of the bed and opposing wall
  - An accessible closet with a minimum 36-inch opening and shelving installed at a height that can be reached from a seated position
- 

### f. Kitchen

The kitchen layout should allow for adequate maneuvering room for the Veteran and have a turning area with a minimum 5-foot diameter. The following kitchen adaptations are considered to be reasonably necessary:

- Roll-under work counter with a width and height that is convenient
  - Roll-under sink with a width and height that is convenient
  - Single lever faucets
  - Accessible cabinets and closets with pull-out shelving and/or sliding doors
  - Electrical outlets and switches that are within reach
  - Accessible dishwasher
  - Side-by-side refrigerator
  - Built-in, roll-under cooktop with front control
  - Built-in oven installed at a convenient height
  - Free standing range with front controls
- 

### g. Maintenance-Free materials

The use of durable, maintenance-free materials is desired. Examples include:

- Vinyl or composite siding
- Clad windows
- Composite exterior doors
- Wood composite for decks and porches

**Note:** When a new addition is constructed, it is acceptable, within reason, to install maintenance free materials on the existing home to match the new addition.

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*Continued on next page*

## 7. SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### **h. Heating and Air Conditioning**

Heating and air conditioning systems should:

- meet or exceed building code requirements;
  - be adequate for healthful and comfortable living;
  - be designed to meet the Veteran's needs (zoned, individual units, etc.); and
  - be equipped with a thermostat or controls that are accessible by the Veteran.
- 

### **i. Electrical Equipment**

Wall switches and electrical outlets should be located in positions that are unobstructed and at heights that are convenient to the Veteran. Typically, they are located 18 inches (minimum) to 48 inches (maximum) from the floor in an adapted housing unit.

Electrical utility boxes should be located so the Veteran has unobstructed access from a wheelchair. Typically, they are located near an egress point with a maximum height of 48 inches to the top breaker.

Other utility controls, including appliance controls and garage door openers, should be located in positions that are unobstructed and convenient for the Veteran.

---

### **j. Security and Emergency Equipment**

Smoke detectors should be should be installed according to local building code requirements. Usually, this requires that smoke detectors be installed in the main portion of each living area, on each level of the house, and at the entrance to each bedroom. Other acceptable security and emergency equipment includes:

- alarm systems,
  - security cameras,
  - intercom systems (excluding whole house audio systems),
  - flood lights/security lights with motion sensors,
  - privacy fencing,
  - carbon monoxide detectors,
  - keyless entry,
  - automatic door openers/closers,
  - fire sprinkler systems, and
  - storm shelters installed to local building code requirements.
- 

*Continued on next page*

## 7. SAH Recommended Adaptations, continued

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### k. Windows

Windows should be durable, low maintenance, and energy efficient. They should also:

- be operable from a wheelchair in a seated position;
  - have a maximum sill height of 2 feet 9 inches;
  - be located so the Veteran has maximum visibility; and
  - have locks that are operable from a wheelchair in a seated position.
- 

### l. Flooring Materials

It is reasonable to replace floor coverings in rooms the Veteran accesses; however, the type of floor covering used must not impede maneuverability. When possible, floor coverings should be durable and low maintenance (e.g. hardwood, ceramic tile or vinyl). Interior floor coverings at ingress and egress points should be of non-slip materials under both wet and dry conditions. Carpeted floor coverings should be low pile, closely woven, and padded with a durable fiber type.

**Note:** Replacing older, worn carpet that impedes wheelchair maneuverability is acceptable but the carpet installed must be low pile, closely woven and padded with a durable fiber pad. Use of the grant is not intended to replace older, worn carpet simply for aesthetic purposes.

---

### m. Laundry Room

An adapted laundry room should have:

- a clear area for maneuvering with a minimum diameter of 5 feet,
  - a front loading washer and dryer, and
  - washer and dryer stands, if necessary.
-

## 8. Special Equipment

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- Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1
- This entire section has been updated.
- 

- a. Introduction** Special equipment is deemed reasonably necessary if it is required to preserve the Veteran's health or contributes to his/her quality of life. Because there are other sources of funding for special equipment, such as Prosthetics and Sensory Aids and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, it is important that SAH Agents encourage Veterans to work with other program areas to maximize any and all available benefits.
- 

- b. RLC-Approved Equipment** The following special equipment is considered to be reasonably necessary and should be approved by the RLC:
- elevators,
  - VPLs,
  - stair lifts,
  - ceiling track systems, and
  - adaptive equipment used to improve the quality of life.
- 

- c. CO-Approved Equipment** The following special equipment must be approved by CO:
- whole house generators,
  - pools,
  - therapy tubs or hot tubs, and
  - any special equipment not included in this section.

**Note:** Special equipment approvals must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification and a recommendation from the RLC, to CO.

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## 9. Adaptations for Burn Injuries and Respiratory Related Injuries

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**Change Date** December XX, 2013, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Introduction** Veterans with respiratory related injuries, or severe burn injuries that reduce range of motion, may have needs that differ from other SAH eligible Veterans. It is important, especially in cases such as these, that each RLC has a flexible and expeditious approach to approving reasonable adaptations based on the specific needs of each Veteran.

---

**b. RLC-Approved Equipment** In addition to the other MPRs and RAs presented in Appendix A, the following adaptations are deemed reasonably necessary for Veterans with burn injuries or respiratory related injuries:

- A larger bathtub or walk-in tub to minimize the range of motion required to enter/exit
- Enlarged showers to accommodate seating
- Motion/touch sensing faucets and light switches
- Integrated, whole-house climate and lighting controls (smart controls).
- Automatic door openers
- Accessible, custom closets and shelving
- Covered or enclosed patios, porches, entryways, retractable awnings, window tinting and/or window coverings to control sun exposure on the interior and exterior
- Conversion of basement areas to finished living areas that provide a comfortable environment free of sun exposure
- Room additions to store exercise equipment and/or other hobby related equipment
- Maintenance free building materials
- Invisible fencing, pet doors, and any other equipment related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran
- Air filtration and dehumidifying systems
- Replacement of carpet with hard surface flooring for dust control

**Note:** As the types of injuries and treatments continue to change, new and creative adaptations may be deemed reasonably necessary. For adaptations that are not included in Appendix A, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification and a recommendation from the RLC, to CO.

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## Appendix B. Recommended Adaptations for Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) Grants

### Overview

**In this Chapter** This chapter contains the following topics.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Topic Name</b>	<b>See Page</b>
1	General Information About SHA Recommended Adaptations	B-2
2	Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less	B-4
3	Recommended Adaptations for Loss, or Loss of Use, of Both Hands	B-7
4	Recommended Adaptations for Burn Injuries and Respiratory-Related Injuries	B-8
5	Recommended Adaptations for Secondary Disabilities	B-9



## 1. General Information about SHA Recommended Adaptations

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**Change Date** February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. Description** Recommended Adaptations (RAs) are suggested modifications and are not required for grant approval. There are no minimum property requirements (MPRs) for Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grants. RAs were developed over time by SAH experts who have gained an understanding of the residential needs of Veterans eligible for the SHA grant.

---

**b. Statutory Requirement** 38 United States Code, Chapter 21, or 38 Code of Federal Regulations 36.4401 through 36.4410, is the governing law that states SHA grants must be made available for adaptations determined to be reasonably necessary by the nature of the Veteran's disability.

---

**c. RAs Based on Disability Type** The RAs for SHA cases are based on the following types of disabilities:

- blindness in both eyes with a 20/200 visual acuity or less,
- loss, or loss of use, of both hands,
- certain severe burn injuries and severe respiratory injuries, and
- secondary disabilities.

---

**d. Flexibility and Exercise of Judgment** There is a need for flexibility and the exercise of judgment based on the physical capabilities and limitations of each Veteran. Equally important is the need to anticipate the Veteran's future needs. SAH Agents should assist the Veteran in using a modular approach to adapting the housing unit. That is, RAs should be chosen by the Veteran on an as needed, or as desired, basis. SAH Agents can contribute significantly to this process by merging awareness of the Veteran's capabilities and future needs with a thorough understanding of the RAs and the collective experience of SAH personnel.

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**e. Waiver and Approval** There is no waiver process for SHA RAs. It is not a requirement that every RA be incorporated into the design of each room, or area, being adapted. Veterans have freedom of choice and may select individual features.

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## 1. General Information about SHA Recommended Adaptations, continued

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- f. Limitations** The list of RAs is substantial, but not all-inclusive. Therefore, if a Veteran desires an RA not included in Appendix B, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification for the RA. The Regional Loan Center (RLC) must submit this request along with a recommendation to Central Office (CO) for approval or denial.

***Important:*** Grant funds must not be used to cure deferred maintenance.

---

## 2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less

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**Change date** February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

---

**a. RAs** This topic contains information about RAs for blindness in both eyes with a 20/200 visual acuity or less, including:

- special lighting,
  - doors,
  - handrails/grab bars,
  - smoke, fire, and carbon monoxide detectors,
  - security items,
  - room additions,
  - covered porches,
  - hard surface walkways,
  - fencing,
  - electrical service,
  - swimming pools,
  - safety defect corrections, and
  - equipment related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran.
- 

**b. Special Lighting** RAs for lighting include:

- florescent,
  - high intensity,
  - light-emitting diode,
  - lighted outlets and switches,
  - open, or
  - indirect.
- 

*Continued on next page*

## 2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less, continued

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### c. Sliding Doors

RAs for doors include:

- sliding doors,
- pocket doors,
- keyless entry, or
- sliding kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors.

If it is not possible to adapt existing cabinets with sliding doors, new cabinets with sliding doors are acceptable.

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### d. Handrails and Grab Bars

RAs include the installation of handrails or grab bars for stability and safety in any area that presents an unsafe condition to the Veteran. Typical locations include the:

- interior walls,
  - walkways/sidewalks,
  - decks/patios,
  - steps,
  - toilets,
  - tubs, and
  - showers.
- 

### e. Detection Systems

Smoke detectors, fire detection systems, and carbon monoxide detectors, preferably with battery back-up, are RAs for adapted housing units.

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### f. Security Items

The following security items are recommended:

- security systems,
- the replacement of exterior doors with solid core doors,
- deadbolt locks,
- storm shutters,
- an emergency exit (e.g. a level 5-foot x 5-foot platform with a stairway and railings), and
- interior, or exterior to interior, intercom system, excluding home audio systems.

If the Veteran chooses an intercom system with a home audio system, the Veteran must pay the difference in cost.

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*Continued on next page*

## 2. Recommended Adaptations for Blindness in Both Eyes with a 20/200 Visual Acuity or Less, continued

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**g. Room Additions** Room additions to an existing home are recommended for the purpose of storing sensory aids and/or exercise equipment. If necessary, the addition can be climate controlled and equipped with custom shelving.

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**h. Covered Porches** The following adaptations regarding porches are recommended:

- Awnings over the front and/or rear doors
- Covering or enclosing an existing porch
- Constructing a new covered porch

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**i. Hard Surface Walkways** New hard surface walkways are recommended and should be 48 inches wide. Replacing an existing hard surface walkway, unless the existing walkway presents a safety hazard, is considered to be maintenance and is unacceptable. The installation of new curbs for an existing walkway is acceptable.

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**j. Fencing** The installation of fencing to overcome a hazard or safety concern is recommended (e.g. the installation of a fence at a steep drop or adjacent to a busy street).

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**k. Additional Electrical Service** Additional electrical switches, outlets, and service capacity to accommodate sensory aids and equipment are recommended if there is a deficiency.

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**l. Swimming Pools** Swimming pools that are medically necessary are acceptable. However, grant funds must not be used for spas, hot tubs, saunas, etc.

***Important:*** The installation of spas or variations of swimming pools are acceptable if hydrotherapy is a prescribed treatment for the Veteran, and medically required.

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**m. Correction of a Safety Defect** Corrections to safety defects are recommended (e.g. the replacement of a space heater with a gas forced air furnace system or the replacement of a gas range with an electric range).

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**n. Service Dog** RAs related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran include, but are not limited to, invisible fencing, pet doors, etc.

### 3. Recommended Adaptations for Loss, or Loss of Use, of Both Hands

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**Change date** February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. RAs** The following items are recommended adaptations for loss, or loss of use, of both hands:

- lever-type water faucet fixtures in the kitchen or bathroom;
  - rubber doorknob covers or lever-type latches/locks for doors;
  - relocation of cabinets, countertops, and sinks to a convenient height;
  - toggle or press type light switches;
  - tap plates to open and close interior doors;
  - keyless entry systems for exterior doors;
  - automatic garage door openers;
  - circuit breaker electrical control panel modifications;
  - smoke detectors, fire detectors, and carbon monoxide detection systems;
  - special plumbing fixtures;
  - replacement of single or double hung windows with crank-type windows; and
  - correction of safety defects.
-

## 4. Recommended Adaptations for Burn Injuries and Respiratory-Related Injuries

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**Change date** February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Introduction** Veterans with respiratory related injuries, or severe burn injuries that reduce range of motion, may have needs that differ from other SHA eligible Veterans. It is important, especially in cases such as these, that each RLC has a flexible and expeditious approach to approving reasonable adaptations based on the specific needs of each Veteran.

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**b. RLC-Approved Equipment** In addition to the other RAs presented earlier in Appendix B, the following adaptations are deemed reasonably necessary for Veterans with burn injuries or respiratory related injuries:

- a larger bathtub or walk-in tub to minimize the range of motion required to enter/exit;
- enlarged showers to accommodate seating;
- motion/touch sensing faucets and light switches;
- integrated, whole-house climate and lighting controls (smart controls),
- automatic door openers;
- accessible, custom closets and shelving;
- covered or enclosed patios, porches, entryways, retractable awnings, window tinting and/or window coverings to control sun exposure on the interior and exterior;
- conversion of basement areas to finished living areas to provide a comfortable environment free of sun exposure;
- room additions to store exercise equipment and/or other hobby related equipment;
- maintenance free building materials;
- invisible fencing, pet doors, and any other equipment related to accommodating a service dog assigned to the Veteran;
- air filtration and dehumidifying systems; and
- replacement of carpet with hard surface flooring for dust control.

As the types of injuries and treatments continue to change, new and creative adaptations may be deemed reasonably necessary. For adaptations that are not included in this appendix, a request must be submitted by the Veteran, along with justification and a recommendation from the RLC, to CO.

## 5. Recommended Adaptations for Secondary Disabilities

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**Change date** February 12, 2014, Change 1

- This entire section has been updated.

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**a. Definition** A secondary disability is a disability that does not entitle a Veteran to the SHA grant, whether service-connected or non-service-connected.

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**b. Adaptations** Adaptations to address secondary disabilities are allowed if the condition is documented by a Department of Veterans Affairs physician. For example, ramps for a blind/wheelchair-bound Veteran are allowed when blindness is service-connected, but the wheelchair condition is non-service connected.

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**Department of Veterans Affairs** **COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT** CASE NUMBER

NOTE TO BUILDER - Unapproved report left at site for builder's convenience is subject to change. Consult lending institution for OFFICIAL REPORT.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION (Include lot and block)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF LENDER (Complete mailing address including ZIP Code)	NAME OF BUILDER
.	NOTE - The VA case number and other identification (address, lot and block number) assigned to the property shall be posted on the site and be so located that the notice can be read from the street. Inability to identify the property may prevent inspection.
	RESPONDENT BURDEN: We need this information to determine, establish or verify the dwellings compliance with the Minimum Property Requirements and eligibility for VA Specially Adapted Housing grant stage disbursement. Title 38, United States Code, allows us to ask for this information. We estimate that you will need an average of 15 minutes to review the instructions, find the information, and complete this form. VA cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless a valid OMB control number is displayed. You are not required to respond to a collection of information if this number is not displayed. Valid OMB control numbers can be located on the OMB Internet page at <a href="http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain">www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain</a> . If desired, you can call 1-800-827-1000 to get information on where to send comments or suggestions about this form.

PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION - The VA will not disclose information collected on this form to any source other than what has been authorized under the Privacy Act of 1974 or Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations 1.526 for routine uses (for example: Authorize release of information to Congress when requested on behalf of a Veteran who purchased the home that we inspected) identified in the VA system of records, 55VA26, Loan Guaranty Home, Condominium and Manufactured Home Loan Applicant Records, Specially Adapted Housing Applicant Records, and Vendee Loan Applicant Records and published in the Federal Register. Your obligation to respond is mandatory.

**1. INSPECTION OF ONSITE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS WAS MADE AT INSPECTION STAGE CHECKED BELOW**

FIRST  EXCAVATION COMPLETE AND READY FOR FOOTINGS AND FOUNDATIONS  FOUNDATION WALLS COMPLETE AND READY FOR BACKFILL

SECOND  BUILDINGS ENCLOSED, STRUCTURAL MEMBERS STILL EXPOSED AND ROUGHING-IN FOR HEATING, PLUMBING, AND ELECTRICAL WORK IN PLACE AND VISIBLE (Individual water supply or sewage disposal system complete and ready for backfill is included in this stage)

THIRD  ALL DWELLING CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT, UTILITY CONNECTIONS, AND ANY SPECIFIED ACCESSORY BUILDING GRADING, DRAINAGE PROVISIONS, LANDSCAPING, WALKS, DRIVES, STEPS, OR RETAINING WALLS REPORTED BY THIS BUILDER AS COMPLETE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE CERTIFICATE OF REASONABLE VALUE

REINSPECTIONS  \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL  \_\_\_\_\_

CONDITION OF CONSTRUCTION AT THIS INSPECTION

A. NO EVIDENCE OF NONCOMPLIANCE OBSERVED  C. NONCOMPLIANCE-BUILDER WILL COMPLY WITHOUT DELAY  E. DWELLING HABITABLE, BUT COMPLETION OF CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE DELAYED BY CONDITIONS BEYOND CONTROL. INSPECTION BY VA COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR REQUIRED

B. SUBSTITUTIONS OR DEVIATIONS  D. NONCOMPLIANCE-BUILDER DOES NOT INTEND TO COMPLY

ITEMIZED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

ABOVE ITEMS WILL BE INSPECTED AT NEXT REGULAR INSPECTION  REINSPECTION REQUIRED

**COMPLETE THIS ITEM WHEN MAKING THIRD INSPECTION**

**2. INSPECTION OF OFFSITE IMPROVEMENTS** REVEALED CONDITION  A.  B.  C.  D.  E. AS DEFINED IN ITEM 1, AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

REINSPECTION REQUIRED

**3. REINSPECTION OF WORK PREVIOUSLY INSPECTED AT**  FIRST  SECOND  THIRD  SPECIAL INSPECTION

REVEALED CONDITION  A.  B.  C.  D.  E. AS DEFINED IN ITEM 1, AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

<b>4. ESTIMATED COST OF INCOMPLETE ONSITE WORK AS REPORTED AT THIRD INSPECTION OR THEREAFTER UNDER CONDITION E, IN ITEM 1 OR 3 ABOVE</b>	ESTIMATED COST	PROBABLE DATE OF COMPLETION
	\$	

**5. CERTIFICATION - I CERTIFY THAT** I have carefully inspected the above property in which I have no interest, present or prospective, and that I have reported herein all conditions observed to be at variance with VA Minimum Property Requirements, approved plans and specifications, and any specific requirements for offsite improvements relating to the property inspected.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF DESIGNATED COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_

**6. VA REVIEW OF INSPECTION REPORT REVEALED CONDITION**

A. PREFINAL REPORT APPROVED

B. ALL IMPROVEMENTS ACCEPTABLY COMPLETED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE OF VALUATION OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR

When making a compliance inspection the inspector must have at hand reports of any previous inspections, approved plans and specifications, and a statement of any specific offsite requirements for the property to be inspected. Other required references include HUD regulation in 24 CFR 200.962d. The inspector makes a careful examination of all improvements to ascertain whether or not the work is at the stage of completion required for the inspection being made, whether or not items of noncompliance listed on a previous report have been corrected, and whether or not there have been any other variations from plans, specifications or VA Minimum Property Requirements. 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 an 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. The Compliance Inspection Report, VA Form 26-1839, is completed as follows:

**HEADING.** The following entries are made: Property street address or lot and block number, builder's name and address and lender's name and address. The case number and veteran's name and address are also entered if provided.

**ITEM 1.** The stage of construction at which inspection is being made is indicated by use of the appropriate check box. First inspection is made at one of two alternative stages whichever has been designated for the subject locality by the VA regional office. "Special" inspection is checked in the case of alterations, repairs or additions to existing construction, and the inspector enters a brief description of the stage of construction in the blank lines provided. Reinspection is checked in all cases wherein 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 stage 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 Item 1 of the form.

If variations are observed, condition "B", "C", "D" or "E", or a combination thereof is checked as appropriate. In these instances the specific variations are listed in the blank lines provided and itemized by use of the letters "B", "C", "D" or "E", as they may apply. Where appropriate, specific reference to sections of the regulations should be indicated. If additional space is required, the carbons may be reversed and the back of the form used.

**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. When the builder is under contract with a veteran owner, a change order signed by the veteran must be exhibited if this condition is to be checked. In these cases the substitution or deviation is listed with the notation "per veteran's change order".

**Condition "C."** (Noncompliance, builder will comply without delay) is reported when unapproved variations are found and the builder is willing and able to satisfactorily correct or complete the work during the normal course of construction.

**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 a concrete driveway, walk and steps, which cannot be poured because of freezing weather.

When noncompliance, condition "C", has been checked at first or second inspection, the inspector indicates whether the item 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 Item 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. When noncompliance or incomplete work, condition "C" or "E", is reported at third inspection "Reinspection Required" is checked in all cases.

**ITEM 2.** This item is completed when making the regular third inspection described in Item 1. Blank lines are provided for reporting inspection findings with respect to offsite improvements such as walks, drives, streets and utilities, specified for the subject property. As in Item 1, condition "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.

**ITEM 3.** This item is used for reporting 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 Items 1 and 2 above.

**ITEM 4.** When condition "E" has been checked under Item 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 offsite work is not included.

**ITEM 5.** 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 regional office construction analyst the opportunity of reporting noncompliance which may have been overlooked at a previous inspection.

**SUBMISSION OF REPORT.** An unapproved copy of all reports is left at the job site for the convenience of the builder. One copy is retained by the inspector for his or her case file. The remaining copy is forwarded directly to the Valuation Officer, VA Regional Loan Center.

**RECOMMENDATION TO VALUATION OFFICER, VA REGIONAL LOAN CENTER.** When a report shows "substitutions or deviations" it must be submitted together with an itemized statement by the inspector showing dollar differences in construction cost occasioned by such changes.

# INVOICE

## PART 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR

1 Case No.(CI Tax Identification No.)	2. Date of Inspection Report	3. Fee (Amt. Claimed)
4A. Signature of Claimant		4B. Date Signed

## CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THAT the services for which this claim is made have been rendered and accepted except as herein noted:

5A. Signature of Loan Guaranty Officer or Designee	5B. Date Signed
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## PART II – TO BE COMPLETED BY VOUCHER EXAMINERS ONLY

6A. APPROPRIATION OR FUND SYMBOL	6B. AMOUNT FOUND CORRECT FOR PAYMENT	6C. DATE SIGNED	6D. INITIALS
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FL 26-638  
Dec 1990(RS)

# INVOICE

## PART 1 – TO BE COMPLETED BY COMPLIANCE INSPECTOR

1 Case No.(CI Tax Identification No.) <b>SSN or Tax ID number</b>	2. Date of Inspection Report <b>mm/dd/year</b>	3. Fee (Amt. Claimed) <b>\$ 000.00</b>
4A. Signature of Claimant  <b>CI signature here</b>	4B. Date Signed  <b>mm/dd/year</b>	

## CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THAT the services for which this claim is made have been rendered and accepted except as herein noted:

**CASE # PH or AH 00000**

5A. Signature of Loan Guaranty Officer or Designee	5B. Date Signed
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## PART II – TO BE COMPLETED BY VOUCHER EXAMINERS ONLY

6A. APPROPRIATION OR FUND SYMBOL	6B. AMOUNT FOUND CORRECT FOR PAYMENT	6C. DATE SIGNED	6D. INITIALS
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FL 26-638  
Dec 1990(RS)