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CONTACT HUD OIG MEDIA RELATIONS: OIGMediaRelations@hudoig.gov

HUD OIG Audit Memorandum: Timing of PHA's Lead-Based Paint Visual Assessments

WASHINGTON DC— Today, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued a memorandum highlighting how HUD can provide assistance to public housing agencies (PHA) to support timely and efficient visual assessments of lead-based paint.

In recent audits of three of the nation's largest PHAs, OIG found that the PHAs did not always meet the requirement to conduct lead-based paint visual assessments within 12 months as required by the Lead Safe Housing Rule. The PHAs incorrectly interpreted the Lead Safe Housing Rule's timing requirement that lead-based paint visual assessments must occur "every twelve months" to be consistent with HUD's timing requirement that physical unit inspections occur annually.

Public housing agencies can efficiently perform both at the same time. However, although the timing requirements are similar, they can be incompatible because the time between "annual" unit physical inspections can exceed the Lead-Safe Housing Rule's 12-month requirement. When the lead-based paint visual assessment timing requirement is misapplied, lead-based paint hazards may not be identified in a timely manner. The HUD OIG memorandum recommends that HUD work with PHAs and issue guidance clarifying the timing requirements to address the misinterpretation, taking into account maximizing the efficiencies gained by conducting lead-based paint visual assessments and annual inspections at the same time.

"National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week offers the important opportunity for everyone to encourage preventative actions to reduce the risk of childhood lead exposure," commented Inspector General Rae Oliver Davis. "Through engagement with public housing agencies to clarify the timing requirements found in the Lead Safe Housing Rule, HUD can further protect families and individuals living in public housing who may be at an increased risk of exposure to lead-based paint hazards, particularly families with children under 6 years of age."

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