

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL

1-1. SCOPE: This Handbook describes the policies and procedures of the Technical Suitability of Products Program. This program provides for HUD's review, evaluation, and acceptance of building systems, components, products, and materials for structures approved for HUD mortgage insurance.

1-2. BACKGROUND:

- A. Section 521 of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1735e) directs the Secretary to adopt a uniform procedure for the acceptance of materials and products to be used in structures approved for HUD-insured mortgages.
- B. Applicants with Acceptable Materials, components, products or building systems receive appropriate technical suitability documents permitting use in HUD associated building construction.

1-3. ACCEPTANCE DOCUMENTS:

- A. Acceptance documents are:
  - 1. Materials Release (MR) - by which HUD accepts a specific manufacturer's building system, material, or product. (Example, Appendix 1A)
  - 2. Engineering Bulletin - by which HUD accepts a manufacturer's housing system or subsystem, sanitary drainage system, and wet core. The two types of engineering bulletins are:
    - a. Structural Engineering Bulletin (SEB)
    - b. Mechanical Engineering Bulletin (MEB)  
(Examples, Appendices 1B and 1C)
  - 3. Use of Materials Bulletin (UM) - by which HUD publishes a generic standard for a product or group of similar products. (Example, Appendix 1D)
  - 4. State Letter of Acceptance (SLA) - by which a HUD State Office accepts factory-produced housing in a specific geographical jurisdiction. (Example, Appendix 1E)

1-1

4950.1 REV. 3

B. Individual Documents

- 1. Are issued after complete analysis by HUD technical personnel.

2. Are numbered consecutively.
3. Have a review date 3 years after the issue date (Use of Materials Bulletins are an exception).
4. Shall be submitted for renewal 90 days before the review date.

C. Mailing Addresses

1. Technical information for acceptance documents other than SLAs shall be sent to:

Manufactured Housing and Standards Division  
Office of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20410-8000

2. Technical information for SLAs shall be furnished to the State Office having jurisdiction; to the attention of the Director, Office of Housing; or Housing Division.

1-4. USER FEES: Request for an acceptance document requires payment of a fee by the sponsor or manufacturer. (24 CFR 200.934)

A. User Fee Schedule (in dollars).

ITEM	NEW	REVISION	RENEWAL
MR	4000	2000	800
SEB	4000	2000	800
MEB	4000	2000	800
SLA	1000	800	400
UM	3000		

1-2

4950.1 REV. 3

- B. Checks and Money Orders shall be made out to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for all acceptance documents. All payments shall be sent to the following address, except SLAs (See below):

Technical Suitability of Products Fees  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
P. O. Box 954199  
St. Louis, MO 63195-4199

For SLAs, send payment to the attention of the Collection Officer (for deposit to Account NO. 86-09-0300),

c/o Director, Office of Housing, or Housing of the appropriate HUD Field Office or Homeownership Center.

C. When to Submit Fees

1. Fees for renewals and acceptance as program administrator for a UM under 24 CFR 200.935 shall be paid in full at the time of initial application.
2. Fees for initial acceptance documents or revisions of SEBS, MRs, MEBS, SLAB shall be paid:
  - a. in full, at the time of application, or
  - b. one-half with the application, and one-half when the draft issuance is returned to HUD with the applicant's concurrence signature.
3. Renewals are required every 3 years.

D. Returned Fees

When a product is ineligible or necessary information is not available, the fee may be returned, or a portion of it may be returned and a portion retained by HUD.

E. Changes to the User Fee System were published in the Federal Register on May 1, 1997 (62 FR 23783).

1-3

4950.1 REV. 3

1-5. GENERAL STANDARDS:

- A. Basic Standards are the HUD Minimum Property Standards (MPS) for Housing, HUD 4910.1.
- B. Supplemental Standards include design procedures and test methods recommended by authoritative, nationally recognized organizations such as:

American Concrete Institute (ACI)  
American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC)  
American National Standards Institute (ANSI)  
American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)  
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating &  
Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)

1-6. EXCEPTIONS TO THE PROGRAM (See also 1-7.E.2):

- A. Certain Products are not eligible for review and acceptance under the Technical Suitability of Products Program. They include products:
  1. For which the quality control requirements,

distribution, and variation in application make it impractical for HUD review;

2. That are basic materials that are not complete products, but are used in the production of other building products;
3. That are major appliances, fixtures, or nonstructural builder's hardware;
4. That do not contribute to the durability of a building;
5. That generally are not included in a mortgage; or
6. That are accepted under the MPS or an existing suitability document.

1-4

4950.1 REV. 3

B. Examples of Exceptions Are:

1. Decorative interior or exterior finishes and coatings
2. Security devices and other alarm systems
3. Swimming pools
4. Storage sheds, trash bins, portable carports, and similar items
5. Laundry lines, awnings, flower boxes, and similar items
6. Electrical fixtures and devices, outdoor barbecues, and lampposts
7. Decorative railing and disappearing stairs
8. Items of equipment or materials not generally included under a mortgage document (e.g., utility meters and mains for sewer, water, electricity, and gas)
9. Mechanical and electrical systems and component equipment (furnaces, air conditioners, water heaters, etc.)

1-7. DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS:

- A. Component: A preassembled part of a building, often containing structural elements.
- B. Engineering Bulletins: Are issued by HUD to provide an engineering description of a building system or

subsystem. They specify quality controls, factory inspection, and material properties that meet an acceptable level of performance.

- C. Material: Any product or substance used in the building construction process.

1-5

4950.1 REV. 3

- D. Materials Releases (MR)

1. These documents, issued by HUD Headquarters, provide for HUD acceptance of specific non-standard building materials, or products not covered by the current MPS.
2. These documents are addenda to the MPS, and are issued only when the material or product is deemed suitable for use in HUD housing programs.

- E. Minimum Property Standards (MPS)

1. These standards establish minimum acceptance criteria for components, materials, products, and methods of construction considered for residential buildings covered by HUD housing programs.
2. Products and methods are considered technically suitable by HUD without an acceptance document if they comply with Federal, industry and other standards and codes referenced in the MPS, or if they comply with HUD-developed construction requirements.

- F. Engineering Bulletins are technical acceptance documents issued by HUD for non-standard factory-fabricated modules, components or subsystems.

1. Structural Engineering Bulletins (SEB):

Indicate structural acceptability of systems or subsystems such as modular housing, log homes and panelized construction for complete housing units, or floor, wall and roof systems. Acceptance of units to be transported into more than one State requires an SEB.

2. Mechanical Engineering Bulletins (MEB):

Indicate structural and/or functional acceptability of wet-core units that consist of a structural envelope and mechanical core. Innovative drainage systems are also covered by MEB's.

1-6

4950.1 REV. 3

- G. State Letters of Acceptance (SLA):
1. SLAs provide for acceptance of Category I (See 24.C.) factory produced housing which use materials and systems covered by the MPS and model building codes (CABO, SBC, BOCA, and UBC).
  2. Are granted by a HUD State Office after review by HUD staff and/or HUD's contractor. Sponsors applying for SLAs should apply to the State Office of the State in which their manufacturing facility is located.
  3. Are sent to other Field Offices or Homeownership Centers in the State, to provide for acceptance of a manufacturer's unit within that State. SLAs are accepted within the issuing State only.
- H. Module: Factory-built living unit, or a three-dimensional prefabricated portion of it.
- I. Prime sponsor (or Sponsor):
1. Manufactures materials, products, or housing systems
  2. Owns or controls the factory
  3. Legally controls the transportation, distribution, erection, and/or installation of the product, and
  4. Is the entity to whom an acceptance document is granted.
- J. Product: Any material or manufactured item used in construction.
- K. Product Classification: Items may not clearly fall into one of the classifications in paragraph 1-3.A. If the item is material- or product-oriented, it may be considered for a Materials Release. Housing component or system-oriented items may be considered for Engineering Bulletins.
- L. Referenced Standard: Any separate published standard included in another standard only by reference.

- M. System: An assembly of building materials fabricated to form a part or all of a building.
- N. Subsystem: An assembly of building materials fabricated to form part of a system.

- O. Use of Materials Bulletin (UM): Generic acceptance document issued by HUD Headquarters to apply to a product or a group of similar products, usually made by several manufacturers.
  - 1. UMs serve as an interim HUD standard for a type of product (plastic bathroom fixtures, carpet, etc.)
  - 2. UMs are also developed to promulgate third-party quality assurance programs when needed (e.g., windows, etc.)

1-8. PROHIBITED USES OF ACCEPTANCE DOCUMENTS: They must not be:

- A. Transferred to any person or successor entity.
- B. Used in Advertising, sales promotion, or in any other way that states or implies endorsement or approval by HUD/FHA, or by any component of HUD.
- C. Used to imply that the product is superior in comparison with other products.

See the first pages of Appendices 1A - 1E for cautionary statements for acceptance documents regarding prohibited uses.

1-9. ASSURING PRODUCT QUALITY AND DURABILITY:

- A. General
  - 1. HUD's policy is to establish reasonable requirements for quality and durability of the products it accepts under its Technical Suitability of Products Program.

1-8

4950.1 REV. 3

- 2. HUD may require the sponsor to furnish the results of specific testing programs/activities to indicate that requirements in the acceptance document are fulfilled.

- B. Product Quality Assurance

Acceptance bulletins shall state requirements for one or more of the following quality assurance procedures:

- 1. Quality control, which is a responsibility the manufacturer is expected to exercise in all production.
- 2. Self-Certification of product conformance to standards cited in the acceptance document.
- 3. Third-Party Quality Assurance, a procedure for

specific production items in which a qualified independent agency validates adherence to standards cited in the acceptance document.

4. Warranties for:
  - a. Product performance for an intended purpose
  - b. Product durability for a specified time
  - c. Performance and durability of a manufacturer's system, including its parts, for a specific purpose and time
  - d. Repair and/or replacement of a material or product not meeting warranty
  
5. Warranty of a Builder's Installation assumed by the manufacturer may include one or more of the following:
  - a. Installer/Applicator training
  - b. Installer/Applicator supervision
  - c. Installation inspection