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## Mobile Home Park Inspections

### *The Department of Housing and Community Development Must Improve Its Inspection Processes to Better Protect Park Residents*

#### **Background**

To ensure the health and safety of residents in 3,640 mobile home parks in California, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) develops, adopts, and enforces state regulations for the construction, use, maintenance, and occupancy of privately owned mobile home parks. Local enforcement agencies (LEAs) under HCD's oversight enforce compliance with health and safety requirements for another 860 mobile home parks. With two field offices, HCD's inspectors conduct full park inspections of mobile home parks to ensure that parks meet applicable health and safety requirements, and they also investigate complaints related to the parks or mobile home lots within the parks.

#### **Key Findings**

- Although it has met its statutory goal of performing park inspections at 5 percent of parks annually, HCD did not conduct full inspections of more than half of the active parks or even visit 9 percent of parks in its jurisdiction in the last decade, which increases the risk of undetected health and safety violations.
  - » It has not established written protocols for selecting parks for its annual park inspections, and it does not consistently track the dates and locations of its inspectors' park visits for other inspection work.
  - » It has not established guidance for its informal visits to parks—field monitoring—to ensure consistency and effective monitoring and proper documentation of visits and issues noted.
- HCD did not consistently conduct all complaint inspections within required time frames and did not adequately communicate with park residents or complainants during inspections—half of the complaint inspections we reviewed were late. Further, most park residents were notified late or not at all of an upcoming park inspection, and residents with violations were not notified of their rights to appeal.
- HCD is not effectively managing administrative aspects of its parks program: its poor timekeeping practices affect its ability to manage the costs and resources of its parks program. Also, it has not taken adequate steps to ensure that inspectors do not have conflicts of interest related to parks they inspect and ensure that inspectors do not misuse state resources.
- Although required to evaluate how LEAs enforce the parks program, HCD has conducted very few evaluations and does not have final procedures or a formal schedule for performing evaluations.

#### **Key Recommendations**

- To reduce health and safety risks, HCD should do the following:
  - » Develop policies and procedures to broaden its selection of parks for inspections to include some that it has not visited in many years; provide written guidance for its field monitoring visits and for identifying and citing common violations; and finalize procedures and develop a formal schedule to evaluate an adequate number of LEAs each year.
  - » Periodically monitor its compliance with time requirements for conducting complaint inspections.
- To ensure that HCD properly communicates with park owners and residents, HCD should review and revise the notices it issues to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.