

RS 1002 CLERGY HOUSING STUDY

(Adopted 06/13/2009)

WHEREAS, the 2008 session of the Annual Conference approved RS 602, Clergy Housing Study, authorizing a study to be made of clergy housing options and opportunities as prescribed in ¶ 252.4e of the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, and,

WHEREAS, a study team has been appointed by Bishop Thomas Bickerton and the chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry, and,

WHEREAS, the study team has met and studied the document “The Living and Working Conditions of the Pastor,” and,

WHEREAS, the team has approved a new document and guidelines for “The Living and Working Conditions of the Pastor,”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the document entitled “The Living and Working Conditions of the Pastor: 2009” be approved as the guidelines for parsonages and living and working conditions of the pastor in the Western PA Conference, along with the document entitled “Parsonage Check-list.”

Task Force on Parsonage Standards, Andrew C. Harvey, Convener
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LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE PASTOR

Revised by the Task Force on Parsonage Standards 2009

Purpose

This leaflet is provided by the Western PA Conference to help churches, S/PPRC, Trustees, clergy and District Superintendents to achieve the living and working conditions necessary for effective Christian ministry and to facilitate appointment-making.

I. Living Conditions

General Guidelines

The church today demands that a minister be not only a preacher, as was the early circuit rider, but a resident pastor and responsible citizen in the community. In order to meet these needs, and to call persons to a dedicated ministry, the church must provide living conditions, which will establish an adequate foundation for effective ministry. When a new parsonage is being purchased, a home inspection is required. Inspections should also be performed for radon mold, and lead based paint. These inspections should also be performed for all existing parsonages.

The standards below are guidelines for all new parsonages, and should be systematically implemented for all existing parsonages and working conditions for today’s clergy and clergy families. Each charge should have a five year long-range written plan in place, with annual reporting of progress to the Charge Conference.

There is particular concern for parsonages where living standards are jeopardized by mold, lead based paint, radon, other structural/or environmental issues and other safety, security, health issues. These shall be immediately remediated. Pastors will not be appointed to a church or charge where these conditions are deemed to exist in the parsonage. No clergy or clergy family shall be required to live in a parsonage that has been determined to have existing safety/security/health conditions!

The district superintendent, working with the local church/charge Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees and Board of Trustees, shall monitor the living conditions of the clergy appointed in their district. Where situations exist that are substandard, plans for eliminating either the problem(s) or the current parsonage and the acquisition of a new parsonage, shall be developed within six months of verification of serious problems, such verification to be achieved through appropriate consultation with the Superintendent.

At the time of appointment, the Appointment Guide, signed by the superintendent, pastor appointed, and the charge/church PPRC chairperson shall be executed. This is especially important in multiple point charges and when clergy couples are part of the appointment.

In the case of clergy couples, often one parsonage will be rented to facilitate the appointment. In such cases, the rental agreement shall provide for prompt 30 day or shortest possible termination of a lease to facilitate future appointments.

A. Parsonage

1. Location.

It should be in a residential area, close enough for convenience but far enough away for privacy. It should provide for the safety, convenience, privacy, and well-being of the parsonage residents.

2. Size of the building and living areas for all new parsonages and goals for existing parsonages:

The parsonage and living areas should be large enough to accommodate the pastor and the pastor's family. It should also provide for the entertainment of guests. The conditions of size are:

- a. At least 4 bedrooms, one bedroom or a den on the first floor
- b. A full bath, including shower, on each floor, with the first floor bath adaptable for persons with disabilities
- c. Living and dining areas adequate for entertaining.
- e. A well-equipped kitchen to include:
 - cooking area complete with range
 - sink area with double bowl, drain space and storage
 - garbage disposal except where not possible
 - refrigerator
 - freezer space
 - storage for dishes, utensils, and food
 - dishwasher
- f. A family recreational room
- g. Adequate closet and storage space. (Closet space in each bedroom and other storage space well distributed throughout the house)
- h. Laundry area with automatic washer, dryer and laundry tub
- i. Adequate, safe outside living area, especially for children.
- j. Adequate outdoor lighting
- k. Two car garage, preferably attached, with automatic garage door opener

3. Ownership. Ownership of the parsonage shall comply with the 2008 *Book of Discipline* ¶¶ 2503.3, 2508, 2541, 2517 and any other portions applicable.

- a. The providing of a church-owned parsonage will be the norm for the itinerant system.

- b. In compliance with the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, there shall be an annual inspection of the parsonage by the Chairperson(s) of the Board of Trustees and Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, ¶ 258.2g(16) and the results of the inspection reported via the appropriate means at the Annual Charge/Church Conference. Particular attention should be given to environmental safety concerns such as the presence of water infiltration into the home, exposed lead paint, radon, asbestos, rodents, and other pests. Every five years there shall be a parsonage inspection by a certified home inspector, commencing in 2010 for all parsonages. This report must be filed with district office.
 - c. Deeds, insurance policies, and other pertinent material shall be kept in a safety deposit box.
4. Accessibility for people with disabilities.
 - a. The requirements for local church buildings in ¶ 2543 in the 2008 *Book of Discipline*, shall be followed.
 - b. The parsonage shall be made accessible for people with disabilities as necessary to insure open itinerancy.
 5. Water and Plumbing concerns
 - a. A safe adequate supply of hot and cold water in bathrooms, powder room, kitchen and laundry.
 - b. Proper sewage/septic system according to the standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and any applicable local codes and standards.
 - c. Water treatment if needed.
 6. Heating and Ventilation
 - a. Automatic heating with humidification
 - b. Dehumidifier if necessary
 - c. Whole house air conditioning is recommended
 - d. Working windows with appropriate screening externally mounted.
 - e. If no air conditioning, then adequate ventilation such as ceiling fans or attic fan
 7. Electrical and other services
 - a. Proper wiring to include electrical outlets in every work area and ground faulted throughout the house
 - b. Electrical panels must include electric breakers with 100 amp minimum and expandable
 - c. At minimum, basic cable TV or satellite service, excluding premium channels (charges/churches are advised to take advantage of “bundling” opportunities)
 - d. internet connection (high speed if possible) and Wi-fi
 - e. Installed fire and carbon monoxide detectors
 8. Furnishings
 - a. Window shades, drapes or curtains throughout
 - b. Carpet or floor coverings throughout. Carpet not recommended for kitchen, bath or laundry room
 - c. Home maintenance to include mower, lawn rake, snowplow or blower, water hose, ladder
 9. Maintenance
 - a. Decoration.

Both the interior and exterior of the parsonage should be kept in such repair as to preserve not only its physical condition but its aesthetic value as well. Neutral colors are encouraged throughout. Drapes, curtains, and floor coverings are recommended to be neutral colors as well.

b. Repair and improvement.

An annual budget item of 2 ½ percent (2.5%) of the replacement cost of the parsonage is recommended for the Trustees and Committees in order to have a consistent program, rather than a haphazard program of maintenance and improvement. A consistent program will be less costly in the long run. Any major improvements which cost over twenty-five percent (25) of the value of the parsonage must comply with ¶2543 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*. Periodic painting, re-carpeting, and replacement of aging appliances is the responsibility of the Trustees of the church/charge.

Major repairs should be avoided during the changing of appointments in order to expedite the total appointment process throughout the connection. When a church delays a move due to the neglect of necessary maintenance and repair to a parsonage, the cost of travel and all overnight accommodations incurred for all subsequent moving delays as well as for the incoming pastor is the responsibility of the charge/church responsible for the delay.

c. Outdoor maintenance.

The pastoral family is responsible for routine external yard and garden maintenance. However, the charge shall insure that the external landscaping of parsonages is of low maintenance, and when necessary shall assume the care of yard and shrubbery, and in the appointment of persons with handicapping conditions, shall assume total responsibility for the yard, gardening and snow removal. Pastors are encouraged to maintain safety in walkways and driveways in snow/ice conditions.

d. Discovering needs.

The Board of Trustees or a designated committee with the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations shall inspect the parsonage, with the participation of the pastor to insure privacy, at least annually to discover needed repairs, improvements and decorations. The initiative should be assumed by the Trustees or the pastor, since it is their joint responsibility to maintain the parsonage in good condition, and since prompt repair lessens the total cost of maintenance. Special attention should be given to health and safety factors. The parsonage, however, is the pastor's home and inspections should be scheduled in plenty of time to meet with the convenience of the family. Needs reported by the pastor between Inspections should be cared for promptly. When a pastor has been appointed to a new charge, the incoming pastor (and spouse if applicable) should tour the parsonage with a member of the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations and the current parsonage occupants, and agree to repairs and redecorating to be done before the next pastor occupies the parsonage. In this regard, careful attention shall be given to the Parsonage Report forms in the Annual Charge Conference materials, and the report shall be completed and returned to the superintendent annually. When concerns of a serious nature arise, the Superintendent shall be notified promptly.

e. Parsonage Book.

It is recommended that the committee prepare and keep up-to-date a record in which are placed all guarantees, repair parts lists, and the instructions for use of equipment belonging in the parsonage. The record should also indicate when and from whom the equipment was purchased, and indicate who to call for service. Also this book may contain the list of who to call for various reasons, where to find various items, when and by whom various improvements were made, and any information helpful to an incoming pastor. See ¶ 258.2g(16) 2008 *Book of Discipline*

f. Insurance and legal papers.

The Board of Trustees shall be certain that the parsonage and church-owned contents are insured for replacement costs against smoke, fire, wind, and other hazards including adequate liability insurance. Deeds, insurance policies, etc. should be kept in a safety deposit box.

10. Utilities.

All utilities shall be paid in accordance with the rules of the Western PA Conference. Utilities shall include

- electricity
- heat
- water
- sewage
- garbage removal
- basic cable TV or satellite service, excluding any premium channels
- internet service (high speed if possible) and Wi-fi
- basic telephone excluding personal calls
- basic cell phone service

The Church/Charge Treasurer shall pay the utility bills for the parsonage.

11. Cleanliness.

The occupants of the parsonage shall be responsible for the cleanliness of the parsonage and shall leave the parsonage in an appropriate condition for the next occupants. However, the dry cleaning of draperies is the responsibility of the church. Regular cleaning of the carpeting is the responsibility of the parsonage family, except in the transition of appointments when the cost of carpet cleaning shall be the responsibility of the church/charge.

The attached Parsonage Check List shall be completed at the start and ending of each appointment and reported to the district superintendent.

Pastors are, simply put, encouraged to leave a parsonage in better condition than when entered!

12. PET POLICY

The Pet Policy as adopted by the Cabinet (June 4, 1991) shall be signed by the pastor and the Chairperson of the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations at the time of the appointment.

Pets in the Parsonage

While it is recognized as a right of the parsonage family to have pets, it is also recognized that the ownership of pets requires the pastor to assume responsibility for these pets. At a minimum these responsibilities include:

- a. Caring for the pets in a manner approved by the humane society.
- b. Securing permission of the local church for the construction of any needed facility.
- c. Assuming financial responsibility for the construction and maintenance of any facility, such as fence, dog house, etc.
- d. Dismantling and removing any facility constructed by the pastor upon moving to a new appointment, unless permission is secured from the local church to leave it intact.
- e. Replacing/repairing any damage done by the pets to the carpets, floors, drapes, doors, lawn, etc.
- f. Upon moving, the pastor must do a thorough job of cleaning and deodorizing to meet the approval of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations and the incoming pastor.

- g. If the parsonage is not cleaned and deodorized to the satisfaction of the incoming pastor and the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, and additional work is required, the outgoing pastor shall be billed for the expenses involved with the permission of the District Superintendent.
- h. Failure to comply with these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action.

To be signed and dated by the PPRC Chair, Pastor, District Superintendent

13. Security of the parsonage (RS803 adopted June 8, 1996).

MANDATORY REGULATION OF PARSONAGE SECURITY

WHEREAS, many of our clergy live in “high-risk” communities, and

WHEREAS, many of our clergy are single and live alone, and

WHEREAS, many parsonages in our Western PA Conferences do not have secure entrances and/or windows,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bishop and Cabinet direct all local Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committees and local church Trustees to inspect the parsonages specifically for security concerns and provide/install dead-bolt locks, security systems or other security measures to the end that clergy and clergy family members may live in secure dwellings, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a report by the Trustees of each local church be made at all local church/charge conferences on this issue and the report shall be part of the Charge Profile in the District Superintendent’s office.

(Submitted by Commission of the Status and Role of Women)

14. In lieu of a church-owned parsonage, a housing allowance may be provided but only after agreement and approval of the Bishop/Cabinet, Church Council, Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, and Pastor in accordance with current Cabinet guidelines.

II. Working Conditions

Working areas, equipment and expenses are determined by the functions of the ministry which the church takes seriously. Only those functions can be fulfilled adequately which are provided with necessary working areas, equipment and expenses.

Regarding any pastoral or charge office, Safe Sanctuary guidelines shall be followed.

All church offices and pastor’s study/office shall have internet access and preferably a secure WiFi.

A. Private Study or Pastor’s Office.

A place outside the parsonage is needed for meditation, study, and counseling that is private and free from distractions. A home office/study is provided at the preference of the clergy family. The external study/office should have/be:

- 1. In full accordance with Safe Sanctuary standards
- 2. Bookcases, desk, chair, guest seating, filing cabinets
- 3. Up to date computer and printer
- 4. Private telephone line and an answering machine or service
- 5. Room temperature control
- 6. Functional decoration
- 7. Proper lighting

8. Secure locks

B. Church/Charge Office.

A place is needed for administrative functions such as publicity, church records, mailings, preparation of bulletins, and correspondence. It should in full accordance with Safe Sanctuary standards and be equipped with the following:

1. Touch Tone Telephone with FAX accessibility and answering machine or service
2. Up to date computer and printer, and if necessary electric typewriter for occasional use
3. Desk, chairs, shelves, supplies, filing cabinets
4. Room temperature control
5. Calculator, copy machine

C. Expenses.

All expenses involved in the upkeep of the study and the office, incurred in the administrative and pastoral duties of the pastor should be paid by the church/charge, such as:

1. Secretarial help
2. Telephone
3. Postage, supplies, promotional materials, etc.
4. Required Accountable Reimbursement Account for the pastor
5. Insurance
6. Internet service (high speed if possible) and Wi-Fi

D. Work Load.

Because of the nature of the minister's task, the pastor's schedule is often so burdensome as to be a threat to the health and the welfare of the pastor's family. We therefore recommend that:

1. The pastor will have two days per week for self, family and Sabbath.
2. The full-time pastor receives four weeks per year for vacation and after twenty-five years of service, the pastor receives an additional week for vacation in compliance with the rules of the Western PA Conference.
3. When the pastor serves as a camp counselor or dean for the camping program of the Western PA Conference or participates in continuing education events approved by the Committee on Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, these opportunities are not to be considered vacation time.
4. Continuing education as required by the Board of Ordained Ministry and/or the current *Discipline* is required of all clergy and the charge shall make available time for clergy to participate in approved events. This is not vacation time. Pastors shall adhere to the existing policies for advanced degrees.
5. The church/charge shall make it possible for the pastor to attend retreats and seminars designed for mental and spiritual growth, and consider underwriting all or part of the costs of such events.
6. The pastor shall be provided one-day per month for personal spiritual retreat.
7. The pastor shall be expected to assume conference and district responsibilities.

III. Concluding remarks

In the event of conflict arising over any of the above matters, either between pastor and church/charge or pastor and pastor, the superintendent shall be notified and is the final arbiter in all appointment matters.

Task Force on Parsonage Standards, Andrew C. Harvey, Convener

PARSONAGE CHECK LIST
For Use When Vacating a Parsonage
Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference

CHARGE _____ **DISTRICT** _____

PASTOR _____ **DATE** _____

1. We have conferred about the following things which need to be cared for by the Church/Charge once this parsonage is vacated:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

2. The Parsonage Family has given careful attention to these areas of the parsonage and property and are leaving them in an acceptable condition:

A. Windows Clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
B. Drapery/Curtains Clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
C. Rugs/Carpet Clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
D. Hard Floors (wood, tile, linoleum) clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
E. Walls, woodwork, baseboards clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
F. Refrigerator clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
G. Range Top clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
H. Oven clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
I. Cabinets, closets, cleaned inside & out?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
J. Light fixtures cleaned?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
K. Are there functioning light bulbs in all sockets?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
L. Bathrooms (tub, sink, toilet, tile, floor) clean?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
M. Has any pet damage been recorded and corrected? List damage & corrections needed on the back of this form.	Yes	No	Comments: _____
N. Yard and shrubbery trimmed and in good condition?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
O. Attic and basement swept and orderly?	Yes	No	Comments: _____
P. Are all appliances (kitchen & laundry) clean and in good working order? (List repairs, if needed, on the back of this form.	Yes	No	Comments: _____
Q. OTHER (Please specify):	Yes	No	Comments: _____
R. OTHER (Please specify):	Yes	No	Comments: _____
S. OTHER (Please specify):	Yes	No	Comments: _____

3. A. Insofar as possible, the parsonage has been left in a condition comparable to that which I hope to find in my new home.

Yes _____ No _____

Pastor's Signature: _____

3.B. I do _____ do not _____ concur with this report.

Pastor/Staff Parish Rel. Chairperson: _____

3.C. I do _____ do not _____ concur with this report.

Trustees Chairperson: _____

3.D. I do _____ do not _____ concur with this report.

Parsonage Committee Chairperson: _____
(if applicable)

PLEASE NOTE EXCEPTIONS BELOW AND SIGN IN THE SPACES ABOVE.
IF THERE IS ANY DISAGREEMENT, THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT
MUST BE CONTACTED AT ONCE.

- NOTE: All utilities must be left connected and ready for use by the incoming parsonage family.

**THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED ON MOVE DAY AND RETURNED
TO THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.**

Additional Notes/Explanations (list below):

**SPECIAL NOTE: Paragraph 2532.4 of the 2004 United Methodist Discipline states:
"The chairperson of the board of trustees or the chairperson of the parsonage
committee, if one exists, the chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish
relations, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned
parsonage to ensure proper maintenance."**

**In order to avoid problems at the time a pastor vacates the parsonage, please make
sure that an annual review of the parsonage takes place each year during a pastor's
tenure.**

MOTION TO CONTINUE CLERGY HOUSING OPTIONS STUDY – The conference approved a motion by Ronald Hoellein for Bishop Bickerton to appoint a team to continue to study clergy housing options mentioned in the first whereas of RS1002.