

NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

November 24, 2014

STAFF DIRECTIVE 14-4

TO: Chief of Operations
District Superintendents
Park Superintendents
Park Rangers

FROM: Michael A. Murphy, Director

SUBJECT: Park Housing



This Staff Directive supersedes Staff Directive 85-11 and is effective immediately.

Park staff housing is provided in North Carolina State Parks for the following reasons:

- 1) The protection and safety of overnight visitors;
- 2) The protection and security of the parks' natural and cultural resources, facilities and equipment;
- 3) To provide for afterhours decision making authority and on site emergency response; and
- 4) To better serve the public and fully protect the North Carolina State Park System.

Park housing is required solely as a benefit to the Division of Parks and Recreation in accordance with attached procedures.

When park housing is available and such housing is satisfactory, safe and sanitary, park superintendents are required to live on-site as a condition of employment. If additional houses are available, qualified park rangers are required to live on-site as a condition of employment. Park superintendents are responsible for making housing assignments, and if housing is not available for all ranger staff, the park superintendent shall designate the best qualified ranger positions required to live in the park, after considering all park operational and protection needs and area responsibilities of ranger positions. The designated positions must be reviewed and approved by the district superintendent. Such designations should be made solely to further the aforementioned reasons behind the housing policy.

The park residence will be the employee's domicile with the expectation that the employee will reside primarily in the domicile to be available for the reasons described above. The division recognizes that overnight absences from park housing during periods of leave and days off are likely. Generally, overnight absences from the park residence should be infrequent and not prevent the employee from routinely providing the after hours emergency response intended by the presence of resident employees.

Exception to this policy may be granted by the chief of operations when it is demonstrated to his or her satisfaction that one or more of the following conditions exist:

- 1) The structural integrity and/or the internal building environment are unsafe for occupancy;
- 2) The residence is too small for the park superintendent's or ranger's family and cannot practically and economically be modified to meet their needs; and
- 3) The chief of operations determines that just cause exists to allow an exception based on extraordinary circumstances that may arise which cannot, at this time, be anticipated.

Any exception to this policy must be justified in writing to the chief of operations and reviewed by all supervisors in the chain of command. Considerations for approval of exception include:

- 1) There must be a commissioned employee available to occupy the park house in the place of the employee requesting the exception for reasons 2 and 3 above;
- 2) The requirement to live in park housing would become a condition of employment, tied to a specific commissioned park position, and would be determined by operational need; and
- 3) If the employee granted the exception is the superintendent, there must be a commissioned employee with appropriate training and experience within the park, available to occupy the park house as a condition of employment, with the understanding that he/she would be required to vacate the house when the next superintendent is appointed. Other considerations as may be necessary.

District superintendents have the responsibility to enforce this policy and take corrective measures to rectify situations which violate this policy. Additional district superintendent responsibilities include:

- 1) Determining whether park housing is satisfactory, safe and sanitary for occupancy;
- 2) Maintaining a district housing list and forwarding this information to the division personnel technician as changes in staff housing are made;
- 3) Ensuring that annual inspections are conducted; and
- 4) Working with any housing resident to ensure the relevant park's needs are being met.

Employees are responsible for all utilities and a monthly service and maintenance fee established by the Division and payable through payroll deduction. As approved by DOA, the Division may allow, upon request, employees in park residences to purchase residential heating fuel at state contract rates.

District superintendents will assign the district maintenance mechanics, or a designated representative, to conduct an annual inspection of all park housing to ensure the proper use of housing and to develop plans for any identified maintenance and improvement needs. It is recommended that the park superintendent, lead park maintenance mechanic and employee be present at the time of the annual inspection if available.

This staff directive is a restatement of a long-standing divisional policy and does not constitute a new requirement. The state park housing policy is attached to this Directive.

Attachments