

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

April 6, 2001

STAFF DIRECTIVE

TO: Superintendent of State Parks
District Superintendents
Park Superintendents
Park Rangers

FROM: Philip K. McKnelly

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 protection and safety of overnight visitors; for the protection and security of the parks' natural and cultural resources, facilities and equipment; and to provide for after hours decision making authority and on site emergency response. Park housing is provided as a benefit to the Division of Parks and Recreation. Staff housing may provide a benefit to the employee depending on personal circumstances, although that is not the intended purpose.

When any park housing is available and such housing is decent, safe and sanitary, Park Superintendents are required to live on-site as a condition of employment. If more than one house is available, 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 will designate the ranger positions required to live on the park after considering all park operational and protection needs.

For the purposes of this policy, living on-site will mean the establishment of a full time primary residence where normal activities of daily living (eating, sleeping, entertaining, relaxing, etc.) are engaged in by the employee and his/her family. Overnight absences from the residence should occur infrequently, usually related to vacation or illness, and will not reflect a pattern of consistent weekly occurrences intended to circumvent the residency requirement by frequently visiting off-site housing.

This policy is in force for all Superintendents and Rangers even if housing is not available at the time of employment. Exception to this policy may be granted by the Superintendent of State Parks when it is demonstrated to his satisfaction that one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The residence is grossly inadequate for the Park Superintendent's or Ranger's family and

cannot practically and economically be modified to meet their needs.

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- The structural integrity and/or the internal building environment are unfit or unsafe for occupancy.
- The employee was required to provide their own house before a park house was made available and relocation would now cause an undue financial hardship.
- The Superintendent of State Parks determines that just cause exists to allow an exception.

Any requested exception to this policy must have the recommendation of all supervisors in the chain of command and be presented to the Superintendent of State Parks in writing with a detailed justification. There must be a commissioned employee willing to occupy the park house in the place of the employee requesting the exception. The substitute employee should have a minimum of two years of experience, and have completed basic emergency medical and search and rescue training. Once an exception is made, the substitute employee will occupy the house as a condition of employment until an exception is granted in accordance with this policy, until the substituted employee is no longer employed at the park, or until a new superintendent is appointed to the park.

This Staff Directive is a restatement of a long standing divisional policy and does not constitute a new requirement. District Superintendents have the responsibility to enforce this policy and to take corrective measures to rectify situations which violate this policy. District Superintendents are to be the judges of whether park housing is satisfactory for occupancy. District Superintendents are also responsible for maintaining a district housing list and forwarding this information to the Division Administrative Officer as changes in staff housing are made.

Employees are responsible for all utilities.

Park Superintendents will assign park maintenance staff to conduct an annual inspection of all park housing to insure the proper use of housing and to develop plans for any identified maintenance and improvement needs. Inspections should be conducted during the months of January and February of each year.

The use of privately owned mobile homes to fulfill operational requirements on facilities will be permitted in situations when state owned housing is not available and when approved on a construction project request form in compliance with SD 97-20.

A state park housing agreement is attached to this Directive. All staff currently occupying state park housing will enter into a signed housing agreement within 30 days of the issue date of this Staff Directive. Thereafter, all staff will enter into a signed housing agreement before occupying any state park house.

PKM/MSD/ghf

Attachments