

## **STANDARDS FOR PARSONAGES**

**Revised July 2012**

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### **Responsible Group in the Local Church**

Since there is no provision in the Book of Discipline for a Parsonage Committee, it is recommended that each local church Charge Conference create a committee of representative members of the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations (or Staff-Parish Relations), Board of Trustees, and any other members as deemed necessary (as per Par. 269.2f) to report to the Administrative Board on concerns of the parsonage family with respect to housing arrangements and needs.

### **Standards for Parsonage (Existing Parsonages)**

For existing parsonages, each local charge shall provide and maintain the following furnishings:

1. Living room and family room furniture
2. Dining room furniture
3. Kitchen, including stove, refrigerator with separate freezer compartment, exhaust fan, and dishwasher
4. Laundry equipment – automatic washer and dryer. Clothes lines are permitted behind the parsonage.
5. Floor coverings
6. Window shades and blinds, or curtains and drapes
7. One fire extinguisher in kitchen and one extinguisher outside of the furnace room. There shall be at least one extinguisher per floor level. All fire extinguishers should be rated 2-A: 10-B:C or higher.
8. Smoke detectors that meet the current N.J. Uniform Fire Code – with a minimum of one per each level of the premises and one outside of each separate sleeping area.
9. Minimally acceptable storage space in each room
10. Drives and walks should be hard surfaced
11. Minimally acceptable outside lighting
12. Trash cans. In municipalities where garbage pickup is not part of the tax base and is billed to the parsonage, that local churches pay for this service.
13. The charge is required to provide one telephone line OR one cell phone
14. Lawn mower, snow shovels, or appropriate service. The charge is responsible for either providing snow removal equipment or providing snow removal service.
15. A study for the pastor in either the parsonage or church building; this is to include a desk, desk chair, minimally acceptable shelving for the pastor's library, additional chairs, and filing cabinets
16. High speed internet service and basic cable or satellite TV service.
17. Furnishings for special rooms such as sun porch, den, etc., that may be different from one charge to another
18. Parsonages should have a minimum of four (4) duplex electrical receptacles per room. Service should conform to the current National Electrical Code requirements and be inspected every five

(5) years by a N.J. licensed electrician. All electrical work must conform to the applicable standards of the latest adopted edition of the National Electrical Code.

19. Parsonages that have “non-electric” heating and/or cooking systems (i.e., oil, gas, coal, wood burning furnaces, stoves, heaters, etc.) should have carbon monoxide detectors placed near such systems in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.
20. Each church should review their parking situation, especially in urban environments where off-street parking may not be available.
21. Each charge shall decide if it will provide a security/alarm system.

**Standards for Parsonages (Purchasing or Building a New Parsonage)**

1 Option One

a. The use of maintenance-free materials in building and in finishing and furnishing. These contribute to keeping maintenance costs lower.

b. The following room sizes (figures in square feet):

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
Living Room	240	280	360
Dining Room	120	180	210
Kitchen	90	140	160
Study	80	96	120
Baths	35	50	60
Bedroom-Single	96	108	130
Bedroom-Double	120	180	210
Family Room	120	160	200

c. A minimum electrical service of 150 amperes, with preference of 200 ampere service.

d. A garage of a size to accommodate 2 cars, plus room for storage of lawn mowers, bicycles, tools, garden equipment, ladders, paint supplies, etc.

e. Space to store large articles of furniture and equipment.

f. The use of minimally acceptable insulation and storm windows.

g. Careful consideration should be given in choosing the location of the parsonage. This consideration might include the distance from the church, accessibility from main streets of the community and the church, the neighborhood and its future, and the community itself and its future growth.

h. There should be no less than 4 bedrooms and 2 baths.

All newly constructed or newly purchased parsonages shall be in full compliance with the dictates of the Book of Discipline. Consideration shall be made for those with handicapping conditions.

“Newly constructed or newly purchased parsonages shall include on the ground floor level one room which could be used as a bedroom by a person with a handicapping condition, a fully accessible bathroom and laundry facilities.” (The Book of Discipline-1992, par. 2544.4d)

2. Option Two

The standards of Option One would apply with consideration by the church of purchasing/leasing/renting a townhouse or condominium. This option would be negotiated by the District Superintendent, the local charge and the pastor following consultation with the District Committee on Church Location and Building.

The purpose of this option is to provide an alternative to the “traditional” church parsonage for ministry in special situations. Allowing for the wide variety of townhouse/condo choices, it is difficult to recommend a standard for such a setting.

## **Responsibility**

1. Each pastor is responsible for:
  - a. Furnishings for as many bedrooms as the family needs.
  - b. Personal items such as television, vacuum cleaner, small appliances, dishes, glassware, flatware, cleaning tools, wastebaskets, and decorative accessories.
  - c. The following regular maintenance:
    - (1) Snow removal
    - (2) Lawn mowing
    - (3) Floor waxing
    - (4) Rug cleaning
    - (5) Trash disposal and recycling.
  - d. It is expected that the pastor shall provide minimally acceptable tenant (renters) insurance.
  - e. Any damage that is caused by pets. While pastors do not require permission from the charge to allow pets to live in the parsonage, they should discuss the pet policy with Pastor (Staff) Relations Committee.
2. Each charge shall provide:
  - a. Utilities – heat, electricity, gas/oil, water, sewage, and basic non-personal telephone services.
  - b. Maintenance for all parsonage equipment.
  - c. Basic furniture for all rooms except the bedrooms.
  - d. Funds for the repair of the parsonage and its maintenance should be allocated and allowed to accumulate so that continuing care and major repairs can be made when needed.

## **Miscellaneous**

1. We recommend that, in addition to the required written reports filed annually with the Annual Conference, there be a complete video inventory of all church-owned furnishings in the parsonage. The inventory shall be maintained and kept current.
2. It should be the responsibility of the Parsonage Committee to become acquainted with the parsonage and, after a new pastoral appointment, meet with the parsonage family to discuss the minimum acceptability of housing and furnishings, and to meet annually thereafter with the parsonage family.
3. The right of the pastor to own furniture and equipment cannot be challenged. However, if s/he does own furniture and goods that s/he wishes to use in the parsonage, and parsonage furniture has to be stored, s/he should make every effort to store it properly so it is in good condition and does not suffer damage from being stored. The pastor assumes financial responsibility for the storage of any unused furniture.
4. The parsonage is the pastor's for his/her tenure in that church or charge. S/he has therefore the responsibility to care for the furniture to protect it from damage by pets or children and, if it is damaged, to return it to a condition equal to that when s/he received it to use. If an item of furniture is damaged beyond repair, s/he is obligated to replace it.
5. In order to respect the privacy of clergy and his/her family, the church has responsibility to make an appointment and secure the approval of the pastor or an adult member of the household, prior to visiting the parsonage at any time.

## **Appeals**

Appeals by the churches or pastors should be made to the District Superintendent as the final authority to interpret and implement the foregoing standards.