

Conference Policy on Parsonage Standards (Excerpt from Board of Equitable Compensation report)

B. The Parsonage Option

1. If the parsonage option is utilized by the local church, charge, or District, then the following should be recognized by all of the parties involved: The parsonage is provided as a private home for the clergy and the clergy's household.
2. The maintenance, upkeep, and improvements of the parsonage are the mutual responsibility of the church, charge, parish, or District (or Parsonage Committee), the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (or other appropriate personnel committee), and the clergy's household.
 - a. The Board of Trustees (or Parsonage Committee) shall be responsible for contracting and providing for the necessary repairs or improvements in a timely manner.
 - b. The Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (or appropriate personnel committee) shall be expected to consult with the clergy about the needs of the parsonage, and to advocate for Conference standards.
 - c. The clergy's household shall care for the parsonage with the same respect as if it belongs to them, and be responsible for the repair of careless or unusual damage, as well as leaving the parsonage clean when moving from it.
3. We call attention of the local church or charge Board of Trustees and Pastor/Parish Relations Committee to paragraph 2542.3(b) of the 2000 *Book of Discipline*:

"b) ... In the case of the purchase of a parsonage, the board of trustees shall either:

 - (1) purchase a parsonage that has on the ground-floor level:
 - a) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability;
 - b) one fully accessible bathroom; and
 - c) full accessible laundry facilities; or
 - (2) purchase a parsonage without the accessible features for persons with disabilities specified above and remodel it within one year's time, so that it does have those features."

It is expected that churches or charges will bring their parsonages into compliance with the requirements set forth below in Section 5, if they are not yet in compliance. The requirements provide a basic standard of living which parsonage families reasonably expect in every appointment. If a church or charge has a parsonage which does not yet comply with the requirements in Section 5, the church or charge shall provide in writing an explanation of non-compliance to the district superintendent at the church or charge conference in the Fall of 2004. It shall also provide a plan to bring the parsonage into compliance and a timeline for the implementation of that plan, or a plan to purchase a parsonage which does comply with conference and Disciplinary requirements, as set forth above in Section 3. The district superintendents shall provide the explanations of non-compliance and plans for compliance to the Board of Equitable Compensation before its meeting in the Spring of 2005.

4. It is required that:
 - a. An annual examination of the parsonage be made by the chairperson of the Board of Trustees or other responsible body (or Parsonage Committee), the chairperson of the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee or other like body, and the clergy and spouse (if any), at the convenience of the clergy's household, and that a report of this examination be filed with the District Superintendent or other supervisory person or body.
 - b. A program of annual maintenance and upkeep be established, and reported to the Church Council or the appropriate oversight body.

- c. A long-range program be adopted to either bring the parsonage up to, or maintain, Conference and Disciplinary requirements.
- d. The church, charge, parish, or District electing the parsonage option shall establish a budget line item annually for the interior maintenance, redecorating, and/or modification of the parsonage to be used at the discretion of the parsonage resident(s) in consultation with the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee or other appropriate oversight body.

5. Requirements for Parsonages are as follows:

a. Living Area.

- 1) carpeting or finished floors.
- 2) appropriate window treatments for privacy.
- 3) guest closet.
- 4) entry door shall have a window or device by which a caller may be observed before door is opened.
- 5) locks on all doors and windows providing ingress adequate to reasonably prevent home invasion.
- 6) outlets for electricity, telephone and/or other telecommunication devices, and cable television, if available.
- 7) electrical outlets in particular should be numerous enough for the electrical appliances that are common, such as TV, VCR, computers, telephone answering machines, stereos, and etc., so that one outlet does not pose a fire risk.

b. Kitchen/Dining Area

- 1) refrigerator with freezer compartment.
- 2) stove with oven, big enough to prepare a meal for a household of four.
- 3) dining area in or near kitchen or in separate room adequate for a household of four.
- 4) permanent cupboards/storage spaces that are accessible and adequate for the storage of dishes, pots and pans, and food for a household of four.
- 5) sink, and counter space.
- 6) dishwasher.
- 7) garbage disposal.
- 8) exhaust fan.
- 9) fire extinguisher.
- 10) outlets for electricity, telephone and/or other telecommunication devices, and cable television
 - a) electrical outlets in particular should be numerous enough for the electrical appliances that are common, such as microwave oven, can opener, food processor, coffee maker, and etc., so that one outlet does not pose a fire risk.

c. Bathroom Area

- 1) one and one-half baths, with fixtures and plumbing for same
- 2) storage spaces for linens and other bathroom items.
- 3) medicine cabinet.
- 4) outlets for electricity that are GFI.
- 5) an exhaust fan is recommended.

d. Bedroom Area

- 1) three bedrooms, one of which is at least 120 square feet, and the others are at least 100 square feet.
- 2) closet space in each bedroom.
- 3) carpeting or finished floors and curtains or window treatments provided in each room.
- 4) outlets for electricity, telephones and/or other telecommunication devices, and cable TV.
- 5) egress window in any basement bedroom.

- e. Laundry Facilities
 - 1) automatic washer and dryer.
 - 2) water softener in hard water areas.
- f. Storage Space
 - 1) an indoor storage space for seasonal and other items.
- g. Insurance
 - 1) replacement insurance coverage, including liability and vandalism on parsonage and church-owned furnishings.
 - 2) clergy must insure personal contents.
- h. Heating and Air Conditioning
 - 1) central heating, thermostatically controlled with provision for heating every room in the house.
 - 2) CO (carbon monoxide) detector(s), if the heating system is not electric.
 - 3) central air conditioning or 220 outlet for provided window air conditioning.
 - 4) equipment and screen for fireplace, as needed.
 - 5) chimneys shielded to prevent entrance of foreign materials.
- i. Garage and Grounds Area
 - 1) two-car garage recommended, one-car garage required.
 - 2) storage space for outdoor equipment.
 - 3) safe place and approved container for disposing of trash.
 - 4) the grounds should be landscaped and have sidewalks.
- j. Electricity
 - 1) minimum of 200 ampere entrance box.
 - 2) all wiring to meet National Electric code.
 - 3) light fixtures in each room.
 - 4) circuits for all heavy duty appliances in appropriate places.
 - 5) accessible switches and outlets in every room.
 - 6) it is recommended that all outlets should be GFI.
- k. Interior of House
 - 1) window shades or other window treatments provided.
 - 2) curtains or other window treatments for unusual size or number of windows.
 - 3) stairways big enough for moving furniture, and well lighted.
 - 4) private telephone line (i.e., a line that is also the church's line is not a private line as referred to here).
 - 5) smoke detector(s).
- l. Outside of House
 - 1) TV antenna or satellite dish, if cable TV lines are not available, otherwise cable TV lines.
 - 2) lightening rods where recommended.
 - 3) combination storm windows and screens.
 - 4) provision for escape in case of fire.
- m. Regular Testing
 - 1) for termites.
 - 2) for water potability if the water for the parsonage is from a private well and not a public utility.
 - 3) testing should be conducted for Radon gas as is warranted.
 - 4) inspection of all heating equipment and church-owned appliances.
 - 5) annual inspection of air conditioning and electrical wiring.
- n. Maintenance Budget
 - 1) for the local church or charge only: two percent (2%) of the replacement value of the parsonage shall be a budgeted item in the local churches or charges operational budget for maintenance.