
Living and Working Conditions of the Pastor

Revised by Task Force on Parsonage Standards 2009
Approved by 2009 Annual Conference

September 2009

Table of Contents

I. Purpose	3
II. Living Conditions	3
A. Parsonage	4
1. Location	4
2. Size of the Building and Living Areas	4
3. Ownership of the Parsonage	5
4. Accessibility for people with disabilities	6
5. Water and plumbing concerns	6
6. Heating and ventilation	6
7. Electrical and other services	7
8. Furnishings	7
9. Maintenance	7
III. Working Conditions	12
A. Working areas, Equipment and Expenses.	12
B. Safe Sanctuaries	12
C. Internet/WI-FI	12
D. Private Study/Pastor's Office	12
1. Private Entrance	12
2. Bookcases, Desk, Chair, Guest Seating, Filing Cabinets	12
3. Up to date computer and printer	12
4. Telephone/Answering Service	12
5. Room Temperature Control	12
6. Functional Decoration	12
7. Proper Lighting	12
8. Secure Locks	12
E. Church/Charge Office	12
1. Telephone with FAX and Answering Service	12
2. Computer and Printer	12

3. Desk, Chairs, Shelves, Supplies, Filing Cabinets	12
4. Room Temperature Control	12
5. Calculator, Copy Machine	13
F. Expenses	13
1. Secretarial help	13
2. Telephone	13
3. Postage, Supplies, Promotional Materials, Etc.	13
4. Reimbursement Account	13
5. Insurance	13
6. Internet and WI-FI	13
G. Work Load	13
1. Two Days Off per Week	13
2. Vacation	13
3. Camping Leave, Continuing Education	13
4. Continuing Education, Required	14
5. Retreats, Seminars	14
6. Monthly Personal Spiritual Retreat	14
7. Conference, District Responsibilities	14
IV. Concluding Remarks	14

Examples of two forms, the ANNUAL PARSONAGE INSPECTION AND INVENTORY and the PARSONAGE CHECK LIST for use when vacating a parsonage, are included on pages 15 and 16.

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I. Purpose

This document is provided by the Western Pennsylvania Conference to help member churches, Pastor-Parish Relations committees (PPRC), Trustees, clergy and district superintendents to achieve the living and working conditions necessary for effective Christian ministry and to facilitate appointment-making.

To review the adopted legislation, refer to the 2009 *Official Journal*, chapter 7, RS 1002.

II. 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 condition,



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, and 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 an existing parsonage that has been determined to have existing safety, security or health conditions!

The district superintendent, working with the local church/charge PPRC and Trustees, shall monitor the living conditions of the clergy appointed in their district. Where situations exist that are sub-standard, 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 district superintendent.

At the time of appointment, the *Appointment Guide*, signed by the district 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 should be large enough to

accommodate the pastor and family. It should also provide for the entertainment of guests. The conditions of size are:

- a) At least four bedrooms, one bedroom or a den on the first floor
 - b) A full bath including a shower on each floor with the first floor bath adaptable for persons with disabilities and/or handicapping conditions
 - c) Living and dining areas adequate for entertaining
 - d) A well-equipped kitchen to include:
-



- (1) Cooking area complete with range
 - (2) Sink area with double bowl, drain space and storage
 - (3) Garbage disposal except where not possible
 - (4) Refrigerator
 - (5) Freezer space
 - (6) Storage for dishes, utensils, and food
 - (7) Dishwasher
 - e) A family recreational room
 - f) Adequate closet and storage space (closet space in each bedroom and other storage space well distributed throughout the house)
 - g) Laundry area with automatic washer, dryer and laundry tub
 - h) Adequate, safe outside living area, especially for children
 - i) Adequate outdoor lighting
 - j) Two-car garage, preferably attached, with automatic garage door opener
-

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

- a) A church-owned parsonage will be provided as 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 chairpersons of the Trustees and PPRC, ¶258.2g (16) and the results of the inspection reported via the appropriate means at the annual charge/church conference (see form, p. 16). 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.

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4. **Accessibility for people with disabilities** -- the requirements for local church buildings in ¶2543 in the 2008 *Book of Discipline* shall be followed: the parsonage shall be made accessible for people with disabilities as necessary to insure open itinerancy.



5. **Water and plumbing concerns**

- 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, 100-amp minimum and expandable
 - c) At a 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 is 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 2.5 percent of the replacement cost of the parsonage is recommended for the Trustees 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 25 percent 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. If a church delays a move due to the neglect of necessary maintenance and repair to a parsonage, all costs incurred by the incoming pastor, including travel, overnight accommodations, an miscellaneous expenses, are the responsibility of the charge/charge 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 Trustees, or a designated committee, along with PPRC 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 PPRC 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 Charge Conference materials, and the report shall be completed and returned to the district superintendent annually. When concerns of a serious nature arise, the district 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 indicates 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 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.
- g) **Utilities** -- all utilities shall be paid in accordance with the rules of the Western PA Conference. The church/charge treasurer shall pay the utility bills for the parsonage. Utilities shall include:



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- (1) Electricity
 - (2) Heat
 - (3) Water
 - (4) Sewage
 - (5) Garbage removal
 - (6) Basic cable TV (or satellite service) excluding any premium channels
 - (7) Internet service (*high-speed if possible*)

(8) Basic telephone excluding personal calls

(9) Basic cell phone service

- h) **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 Parsonage Check List (sample on page 16online at www.wpaumc.org or from your district superintendent) 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!
-

- i) **Pet Policy** shall be signed by the pastor and the chairperson of the PPRC at the time of the appointment. 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. Failure to comply with these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action. At a minimum these responsibilities include:



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- (1) Care for the pets in a manner approved by the Humane Society
 - (2) Secure permission of the local church for the construction of any needed facility
 - (3) Assume financial responsibility for the construction and maintenance of any facility, such as fence, dog house, etc.
 - (4) Dismantle and remove any facility constructed by the pastor upon moving to a new appointment, unless

permission is secured from the local church to leave it intact

- (5) Replace or repair any damage done by the pets to the carpets, floors, drapes, doors, lawn, etc.
- (6) Upon moving, the pastor must thoroughly clean and deodorize the home to meet the approval of the PPRC and incoming pastor
- (7) If the parsonage is not cleaned and deodorized to the satisfaction of the incoming pastor and PPRC, and additional work is required, the outgoing pastor shall be billed for the expenses involved with the permission of the district superintendent.

j) Security of the parsonage

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 PPRC 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 beginning in 1997 on this issue and the report shall be part of the charge profile in the district superintendent’s office.

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, PPRC, and pastor in accordance with current Cabinet guidelines.

III. Working Conditions

- A. **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.
- B. **Safe Sanctuaries** -- regarding any pastoral or charge office, Safe Sanctuaries guidelines shall be followed.
- C. **Internet/WI-FI** -- all church offices and pastor's study/office shall have internet access and preferably a secure WI-FI.
- D. **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:



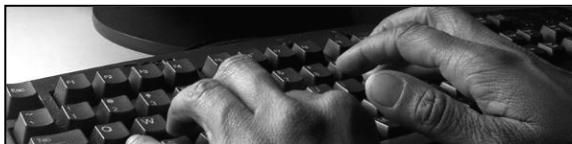
- 1. A private entrance
 - 2. Bookcases, desk, chair, guest seating, filing cabinets
 - 3. Up to date computer and printer
 - 4. Private telephone line and an answering machine or service
 - 5. Room temperature control
 - 6. Functional decoration
 - 7. Proper lighting
 - 8. Secure locks
- E. **Church/charge office** -- a place is needed for administrative functions such as publicity, church records, mailings, preparation of bulletins, and correspondence. It should 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 needed, electric typewriter for occasional use
 - 3. Desk, chairs, shelves, supplies, filing cabinets
 - 4. Room temperature control

5. Calculator, copy machine

- F. **Expenses** -- all expenses involved in the upkeep of the study/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 and WI-FI



- G. **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. It is therefore recommended that:
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1. The pastor will have at least two days per week for self, family and Sabbath. (Note: the Western Pennsylvania Cabinet defines full-time as 50 hours of work per week for the purposes of making appointments.)
2. The full-time pastor receives four weeks per year for vacation and after 25 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 PPRC. These opportunities are not 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.
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IV. 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 district superintendent shall be notified and is the final arbiter in all appointment matters.

ANNUAL PARSONAGE INSPECTION AND INVENTORY

DATE: _____

NAME OF CHARGE: _____

Pastor: _____

ADDRESS OF PARSONAGE (IF NONE, WRITE "NONE"): _____

Is parsonage currently being used for a pastor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If not, who is using parsonage? _____

If not, does the lease enable the appointment of a pastor if needed? _____

☐ Yes ☐ No

Which church(es) own(s) the parsonage? _____

Approximately when was the parsonage built? _____

Please describe the condition of the parsonage as to: _____

Overall condition: _____

Appraisal value: _____

Appliances: _____

Inside rep: _____

Inside repair: _____

Landscaping: _____

Garage, if external: _____

Please list what the charge/church needs to now in the appointment year to maintain the condition of the parsonage:

1. _____ Cost: _____
2. _____ Cost: _____
3. _____ Cost: _____

Does the charge/church expect to complete the above repairs/maintenance projects in the appointment year we are in now? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Give dates for the future repairs/maintenance projects in the appointment year we are in now? _____

Is the parsonage accessible for people with disabilities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Can it be made accessible? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Trustee Chair: _____ Pastor: _____

SPRC Chair: _____ Date of Inspection: _____

PLEASE LIST BRIEFLY THE LONG RANGE MAINTENANCE PLANS: (Use back of this sheet)

The Annual Parsonage Inspection and Inventory form is available from your district superintendent or online at www.wpaumc.org.

The Parsonage Checklist for use when vacating a parsonage is available from your district superintendent or online at www.wpaumc.org.

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 items in 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 (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. Pets, 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: _____