

OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE CLERGY HOUSING STANDARDS AND POLICY

Approved by annual conference June 2022

- I. Defines the implementation of the responsibility for housing to be used by clergy of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

This Policy provides guidance for OR-ID Conference churches in the implementation of housing for clergy appointed to their church or churches. The requirement for providing clergy housing are noted in paragraphs 247.19, 258.2g(16), and 627 of the 2016 Discipline plus in the Commission on Equitable Compensation Report in the 2020 OR-ID Conference Journal, page 171.

- A. The primary responsibility for clergy housing resides with the Administrative Board, Church Council or other governing body. One of the responsibilities as defined by 2016 Discipline, ¶ 252.4e, is: “review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provisions of adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report the same to the charge conference for approval.” Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church governing body to provide adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report this to the Charge Conference. A part of this is the annual parsonage inspection referred to in Section ID of this policy. This annual parsonage inspection report must also be provided to the District Superintendent(s). See II below for church-owned parsonage standards and III below for housing allowance standards
- B. The church governing body may delegate administrative responsibility for clergy housing to the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or to a Parsonage Committee. However, it is understood that ultimate responsibility resides with the church governing body.
- C. When church-owned property is used as clergy housing, it is referred to as a parsonage. Church-owned housing not used as clergy housing is not a parsonage but remains subject to this policy. Property not used as housing (by clergy or others) is not subject to this policy.
- D. If a Parsonage Committee is established, membership is to be nominated by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and elected by the Charge Conference, or appointed by the church governing body. It is suggested that its membership include the following: One trustee elected by the Board of Trustees, one member of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, three members at large, the minister, and one other member of the minister’s household. This Committee shall direct and oversee the parsonage upkeep and maintenance. If there is a single governing body, this body may also serve as the Parsonage Committee with strong input by the pastor and spouse.

The Parsonage Committee or the church governing body must inspect the parsonage annually, preferably in April, to determine if these housing recommendations are being maintained and refer to the Board of Trustees any recommendations for improvement. The Parsonage Committee should meet at least annually, and should report to the Charge Conference (Discipline ¶ 2533.4). The form, "Local Church Parsonage Annual Report", in the Forms, End of Year section of the umoi.org website should be used for this annual inspection. Even if the parsonage is occupied by someone other than the pastor or is not occupied, this annual inspection must be done. If a local church does not perform an adequate annual inspection for two years, the District Superintendent(s), may direct an inspection of the parsonage. The local church may be charged for this inspection.

- E. When more than one church share a pastor, all the churches shall support the pastor's housing in proportional amount agreed upon by the churches and the District Superintendent(s). A suggested method is for the churches to support the pastor's housing in proportion to their support of the pastor's salary. If a parsonage is provided, then all the churches shall share the cost of parsonage maintenance in the agreed upon proportion. These funds shall be used by the parsonage provider to maintain the parsonage in the appropriate manner as directed by the Parsonage Committee and this Policy. This is true, even if all or several churches have a parsonage since the expense for the parsonage chosen to house the pastor must be supported by all the churches in the agreed upon proportion. Also, a Parsonage Committee shall be set up that includes members from all the sharing churches with their voting on the Parsonage Committee in proportion to their agreed upon parsonage support. (Note: the minister and the 26 minister's household member do not count in this proportionality.)
- F. Parsonage recommendations and the definition of an adequate housing allowance (See IIIA) should apply to all ministers under appointment to a local church regardless of marital status or family size.
- G. If a church or charge does not have a parsonage, and no provision has been made to provide for a housing allowance, the church shall either:
 - 1. Develop a plan to acquire a suitable parsonage with sufficient funding for the purchase, or
 - 2. Provide for an adequate housing allowance for the minister(s). (See IIIA and Commission on Equitable Compensation Report.)
- H. During the annual Charge Conference, the District Superintendent(s) may ask if the housing allowance provided by the local church is in compliance with Conference standards. Each local church is to be provided with a copy of the Clergy Housing Standards and Policy.

POLICY

II. Church-owned Parsonage

A. The House

1. Ownership and Privacy. It should be recognized that a minister occupying a church-owned parsonage is in a relationship similar to that of a renter, with the church being understood as the landlord. The Discipline, ¶258.2g) (16) says, "The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family."
2. Minimum number of rooms: 3 bedrooms, dining area, kitchen, one and one-half (preferably two) baths, with adequate closet space in each, linen storage, garage and/or carport for a minimum of two automobiles, and storage for lawn equipment.
3. Additional desirable features: family room, extra bedroom or study space, bookshelves, fireplace with glass door and tools (alternative: modern wood-burning stove and accessories).
4. Energy Efficiency: adequate heating plant with annual maintenance and modifications for current technology. Insulated windows and adequate insulation in walls and ceiling are essential. Air conditioning should be provided in any locality where the climate requires it. An energy audit should be made, and recommendations referred to the Board of Trustees.
5. Additional Essential Features
 - a. All church-owned furnishings and equipment should be in good condition with regard to appearance and usability
 - b. Adequate electrical outlets should be provided, including those for refrigerator/freezer facilities, air conditioning, television, and other devices.
 - c. All windows should have blinds and/or draperies in good condition.
 - d. Windows should provide adequate ventilation, and those which open should have accompanying screens.
 - e. Floor covering in all areas should be in good condition and up to date. Consideration should be given to ease of maintenance.
 - f. Fencing should be installed and maintained where necessary to provide protection, containment, and ample area for activities for small children.
 - g. Dead-bolt locks, television antenna or cable installation, smoke alarm(s), and working doorbells should be provided.
 - h. Parsonage shall have upgraded electrical service to meet present day electrical needs.

B. Furnishings and Equipment to be Provided

1. Kitchen, electric or gas range, refrigerator with minimum of 17 to 21 cubic feet of space, with a freezing compartment or a separate freezer; adequate cupboard space; adequate counter space with good finish. A dishwasher and disposal are highly recommended. Outlet and space for a microwave oven should be provided.
2. Laundry Area: current models of automatic washer and dry, in good operating condition.
3. Yard Care: power lawn mower, garden hoses and sprinklers, garden tools and equipment.
4. Telephone: two telephones should be provided. The telephone deposit and connection should be maintained by the church to prevent interruption between pastorates.
5. Consideration should be given to providing floor lamps in parsonages that have no overhead lights.
6. Condition: when furnishings and equipment are no longer in good condition with regard to appearance and usability, they should be removed and replaced as soon as practical. Out-of-date items or the discards of others should not be placed in the parsonage. Decisions in this regard should reside with the Parsonage Committee and pastor.
7. Inventory: an up-to-date list of all parsonage furnishings, including dates of purchase, serial numbers, and related data should be kept, with copies to be filed with the Parsonage Committee, church office, and the District Superintendent.

[Conference Rule 12.061 Parsonages shall be furnished, a minimum, with a kitchen range, refrigerator, automatic washer, automatic dryer, living and dining room carpet (floor covering), curtains, draperies, shades, TV antenna or cable installation, fireplace equipment (if needed), lawn and garden tools and equipment]

C. Care of Property

1. Insurance: coverage is normally provided by the church for all fire and casualty losses, including public liability, including the replacement cost of the parsonage and church owned furnishings and equipment. Clergy are responsible for insuring personal property, including furniture. The pastor shall purchase renters' insurance.
2. Repairs: an amount shall be provided in the local church budget for repairs and maintenance of the parsonage. (An amount equivalent to two percent [2%] of the value of the parsonage is recommended. This can be achieved by paying one-twelfth [1/12th] of the yearly amount each month into a special reserve, which should be cumulative.)
3. Interior and exterior painting should be provided as required to keep the house in good condition and appearance.

4. Operating Procedures:

- a. A formal agreement between the pastor and the church shall be instituted. The agreement shall clarify the expectations of both the church and the pastor with regard to the matters listed in this policy statement. A review upon the arrival of the incoming pastor and two weeks before the departure of the outgoing pastor is in order to conform to the agreement. (see revised sample form below) The clergy shall make a security/cleaning deposit to cover damage and cleaning costs for the parsonage. The deposit will be obtained via payroll deduction during the first 6 months of the clergy use of the parsonage. The church will place the deposit in trust to be refunded at the end of the clergy appointment if the parsonage is in reasonable condition considering normal wear and tear. Any cleaning and damage costs incurred by the church for the parsonage would be deducted from the deposit.
- b. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee in cooperation with the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for seeing that all necessary work is done to keep the parsonage up to these recommendations.
- c. An annual review should be made of the agreement, involving the PastorParish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee and Board of Trustees, with the pastor's family.
- d. The parsonage family should be consulted in the selection of appliances and furnishings, and their taste considered in determining color and plans for interior decorating. Neutral colors for drapes and carpets are recommended so as to fit with whatever color décor of furnishings the parsonage family may bring into the parsonage.
- e. A parsonage history should be kept in the church files, providing age of the building, its assessed evaluation, dates and types of improvement, including purchases of appliances and a list of church-owned furnishings. Photos are desirable.
- f. The following information should be supplied to the minister by the Parsonage Committee in the form of a regular Parsonage Reference Manual containing:
 1. Location of water shut-off valves and outside faucets including instructions on "winterizing" outside plumbing.
 2. Locations and drawing for all electrical disconnect panels with appropriate labels on breakers/fuses.
 3. Instructions on all appliances including lighting pilot lights in furnaces, water heaters and stoves.
 4. Directions on the use of all power equipment including lawn mowers and other power tools belonging to the parsonage.
 5. Instruction booklets for appliances.

6. Suggested list for service personnel and service providers (volunteers) within the church.
 7. Schedule of regular maintenance to be carried out with the parsonage committee.
 8. Any other information specific to the parsonage and grounds.
5. Prior to moving out of a parsonage, the parsonage family shall clean, or arrange and pay for the cleaning of the house, including carpets and rugs. If this is not done, the Parsonage Committee shall have the option of hiring the work done and deducting the expenses from the security/cleaning deposit before refunding the deposit to the outgoing pastor.

D. General Suggestions

1. Ministers are encouraged to live in the parsonage(s) provided by the local church where the parsonage(s) is adequate according to these guidelines. Consultation between the church, District Superintendent, and the pastor should occur if the parsonage is not appropriate.
2. The parsonage is the home of the pastor and family, and their rights and privacy should always be respected by members of the congregation. With rights comes responsibilities for the appearance and condition of the parsonage. The minister's family and the Parsonage Committee should work together to exercise good care of all parsonage property. (See IIA and IIC4 above.)
3. When the pastor moves, the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee should see that the lights, telephone, and water are left connected. The deposit for public utilities should be provided by the church.
4. If a gift of furniture or furnishings is made, the donor should designate specifically if it is to remain in the parsonage or is a personal gift to the pastor.

[Conference Rule 1.311 Parsonage Possession. Unless otherwise agreed upon by the incoming and outgoing clergy, the Chairs of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committees, and the District Superintendent, a clergy moving from a parsonage shall fully vacate it of his or her personal property, furnishings, and effect

III. Housing Allowance Standards

- A. An adequate housing allowance may be defined as an amount sufficient to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards of a church-owned parsonage and its furnishings and equipment (as defined by IIB).

- B. Churches are encouraged to be attentive and responsive to the individual needs of minister with regard to housing.
- C. In the event that a church and its pastor are considering a change from a parsonage to a housing allowance, this is to be done in consultation with the District Superintendent and the District Committee on Church Location and Building. Thorough attention should be given to the advantages and disadvantages of such a change. A church should be prepared, through careful preservation of adequate assets, giving attention to market values and trends, to provide future housing which meet Conference standards. (Book of Discipline ¶ 2544 and Conference Rule 12.061)
- D. Where the housing allowance is provided and in order to allow the minister maximum benefits allowed by the Internal Revenue Service, the following guidelines are suggested:
 - 1. For churches reporting to the Charge Conference and the District Superintendent, the amount designated for Housing Allowance should be the amount required to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards for a church-owned parsonage. Other amounts designated for housing allowance may be mutually agreed upon between the pastor and the church with the consent of the District Superintendent. Consideration should be given to costs of maintenance and repair that would otherwise be paid by the church to maintain a parsonage. The housing allowance is in addition to any amount designated for utilities.
 - 2. For Federal Income Tax purposes, it is recommended that the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee make a separate allocation of total compensation including housing allowance as established by the Charge Conference in order to reflect the actual cost of providing a home. This designation should be made in a letter to the pastor in advance of the effective date.

IV. Cabinet Policy Regarding the Sale of Parsonage
See Conference Rule 12.062

PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE/PARSONAGE COMMITTEE
AGREEMENT (Sample Form for Optional Use)

1. It is the responsibility of the incoming pastor to note the condition and cleanliness of the parsonage. A written inventory is recommended.
2. It is the responsibility of the pastor to maintain the parsonage ground—keeping it presentable at all times: e.g., mowing and watering lawn, trimming and maintaining shrubs, removing leaves, shoveling snow in winter, etc.
3. The pastor will be responsible to replace or pay for broken and/or misused items.
4. It is the responsibility of the local church to maintain and replace for normal wear and usage all parsonage furnishings and equipment.
5. The costs of damage to the parsonage resulting from the activity of pets should be the responsibility of the parsonage family.
6. A meeting of the pastor and Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee should be held annually for review of the condition of the parsonage. It is the responsibility of the out-going pastor to see that the parsonage is thoroughly cleaned for his/her successor.

Signatures:

Pastor

PPR/PC

Date

Date

Adopted June 1986; revised June 1996, revised June 2011. Revised June 2022.