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## HOUSING POLICY

Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

### **Introduction:**

1. Regular full-time, employed clergy are entitled to either a home/rectory or a housing allowance as part of the salary compensation package. Traditionally, the housing component of a compensation package has been available in the form of a rectory provided by the parish. This provided several advantages both for the clergyperson and parish. In today's world with changing conditions many parishes are eliminating their rectories and/or many clergypersons prefer to find their own housing arrangements which are not in rectories.
2. When a new clergyperson is hired in a parish, a decision about housing arrangements must be determined in negotiations between the clergyperson and the parish before an appointment is made. The request to consider an option of a housing allowance may come from the clergyperson, parish or Bishop.

### **Rectory Housing**

3. All new build rectories must meet all the Mandatory Standards listed below. It is the responsibility of the Regional Dean and Parish Wardens to develop a 5 year plan to attain Mandatory Standards for existing rectories. All new build rectories must meet the Additional Standards. An existing rectory should, but is not required to, meet the Additional Standards as outlined below.

### **Mandatory Standards:**

- If the parish does not provide a parish office in an associated church, then there must be a study available on the main floor of the Rectory with universally accessible access.
- Where the parish office is located in the rectory then the main access for the rectory must meet the code for accessibility.
- The parish must pay for all utilities and services including heat, water, electricity, telephone (other than personal long-distance calls) and property insurance. This insurance excludes "Contents Insurance".
- The home must come equipped with a fridge, stove, washer and dryer.
- Basic internet services must be provided by the parish at the location of either the parish office or the rectory.
- The house must be installed with operating smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detector, and must have regular Radon testing.

### **Additional Standards:**

- The rectory should consist of a unit with a minimum of three (3) bedrooms and 1 and ½ baths.
- The home should come equipped with a dishwasher.

- As well, the house should be brought up to Provincial Building and Safety Codes, especially with regard to all electrical and safety matters.
- All parishes are encouraged to provide security systems for rectories.

#### Upkeep of Rectory

4. The parish and clergy person shall at the time of appointment of the clergy person as rector of the parish establish the responsibility of each party with respect to maintenance of the interior of the building and grounds of the property in a clean, attractive and safe condition. If damage is done to the building or property by a resident clergyperson, then the clergyperson shall be responsible for the repairs or cleaning of the property to restore it to its original or an acceptable condition. The clergyperson may make no structural alteration to the property without the written consent of the Parish Council.
5. The parish is responsible for the annual inspection of the house by a representative of the Parish Council together with the clergyperson, preparing a report and presenting it to the Parish Council outlining any deficiencies found, and any steps taken or planned to be taken to eliminate them, together with a timeline to complete the work. If the work is not completed on a timely basis, the clergyperson may approach the Parish Council requesting the same.
6. It is the responsibility of the Regional Dean, clergyperson and wardens to carry out a property inspection every three (3) years to develop a three (3) year plan for upgrades to maintain the Rectory Diocesan Standards, as well as address any of the previously identified deficiencies.

#### **Fair Rental Value for Rectories and Housing Allowances**

7. If a Housing Allowance is provided, then the comparable housing must meet the standard above as outlined for rectories and be within a 30 minute drive of the church or, in a multi-point parish, one of the churches in that parish. The Housing Allowance is based on Fair Rental Value (FRV) of the comparable housing within the bounds of the parish as assessed and documented by up to three local realtors or property management firms, or another valid source. FRV includes the utilities of heat, electricity, telephone, water, and internet if not provided in the parish office.
8. The Housing Allowance and the FRV of the rectory should be reviewed by Parish Council at least every three (3) years.
9. In areas where it is difficult to find three realtors willing to provide a Fair Rental Value (FRV), or at the request of either the clergyperson or parish wardens, the Diocesan Bishop or designate will provide the FRV for the purpose of the Housing Allowance in that parish.

#### **Special Circumstances**

10. With the agreement of the Parish Council and the Bishop,
  - A clergyperson may choose to live a greater distance from the parish.
  - A clergyperson may choose to live in a house, apartment, etc., which is smaller than the minimum requirements for a rectory.

#### Housing Advance

11. If the parish requires a clergyperson currently living in a rectory to move to a Housing Allowance situation, then the parish must provide an advance to the clergyperson for the first month's rent and damage deposit, up to a maximum of 10% of the annual housing allowance, if requested by the clergyperson. If the move has been initiated at the request of the Bishop, then the advance must be provided by the Diocese. Any advance would be paid back by the clergyperson over a 12 month period.
12. At a new appointment the parish may provide the above advance to the clergyperson, the amount and the terms to be negotiated at the time of the appointment.

#### Two Clergy Co-habiting

13. When two clergypersons are co-habiting then both negotiated compensation packages shall include either rectory or housing allowance.

#### Pro-Rata Housing

14. If a clergyperson is working less than full-time, then the housing allowance is pro-rated on the percentage of time worked. The housing benefit for the rectory is pro-rated on the percentage of time the clergyperson lives in the rectory.

#### Housing in Illness and in Death

15. The family of a deceased clergyperson in a parish must be allowed to occupy the rectory for three months from the date of the death of the deceased clergyperson. The parish will be responsible. The consent of the Bishop must be obtained for any period longer than three (3) months.
16. In the case of a deceased clergyperson in a parish the family of the priest must continue to receive the housing allowance for up to three (3) months. The parish will be responsible. The consent of the Bishop must be obtained for any period longer than three (3) months.
17. The parish's obligation to provide rectory or housing allowance to a clergy person who is unable to provide clergy service due to serious illness, infirmity or other conditions shall be determined in accordance with the short term and long term disability insurance programs of the diocese.