



File Code: 6440

Date: May 1, 1998

Route To:

Subject: Management of Quarters

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and IITF Director

Management of real property includes disposal of marginal and unneeded land and associated improvements. Our ability to maintain and upgrade our facilities becomes more difficult with decreasing budgets and new laws that increase the cost of ownership. The focus of this letter is on Forest Service (FS) management of quarters and problems associated with the quarters program.

While considering this situation, keep in mind that nationally we face a \$167,000,000 cost to properly maintain and upgrade our quarters. We can no longer afford to keep nonessential (nice to have) quarters.

The use of FS housing has been decreasing for a number of years and with limited maintenance funds, we must reduce the number of quarters units to those that are necessary to meet program needs consistent with regulations.

The enclosed paper, Quarters - A Review, provides a succinct look at the use of FS housing, the costs, and the rules concerning acquisition of housing. It also provides recommendations for improving our quarters program.

Effective immediately you are to do the following:

- Notify tenants, except those in barracks, that we are reviewing all quarters to determine if the quarters are necessary to meet FS program needs.
- Conduct and integrate local Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA) with local planning and implementation processes to determine for consideration effects on employees, and community housing markets, including any mitigation measures to reduce any potential adverse impacts prior to final decisions.
- Include facility engineers, Lands staff, Civil Rights staff, the partnership council, and quarters officers in planning and implementation.
- Ensure that the reduction of quarters is in line with any existing or proposed organization restructuring or downsizing efforts. Likewise, ensure that quarters reduction proposals are documented or amended through CRIA, as an integral part of local planning and implementation processes.



- Utilize Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11 criteria, as well as when conducting CRIA/planning making decision processes to adequately consider potential effects on employees and local housing markets for decision regarding new construction and reduction of existing quarters.
- Convert quarters to other uses (office, storage, etc.), if there is a need, and they are located on the national forest, have been vacant for over a year, and/or are not occupied by FS employees.
- Report all quarters on administrative sites that have been vacant for over a year and those quarters that are not occupied by FS employees to your Lands staff for exchange.
- Survey all the remaining quarters and identify for disposal those that are within a 2-hour round trip commute (OMB Circular A-11) of available housing unless they are necessary for service or protection of other Government property.
- Document the survey and reasons for keeping each unit.
- Designate and report quarters for disposal that exceed the 2-hour commute if they are not necessary for service or protection.
- Provide adequate notice to tenants when the quarters they occupy are scheduled for disposal.
- Provide tenants information about local housing availability as appropriate and give them a reasonable time to locate replacement housing.
- Use vacancies caused by transfers and retirements as opportunities to dispose of housing that is no longer required for program need.

Except in cases of required occupancy housing (i.e., occupancy is a job requirement), the decision to dispose of current housing units does not carry a mid term bargaining notice requirement. However, consistent with Article 29.1a of the Master Agreement, and management's general interest to resolve employee-related issues collaboratively, you are encouraged to inform Local Union officials and provide the opportunity for predecisional input on plans to inventory and dispose of quarters occupied by bargaining unit employees.

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We recommend that you start to gather survey information while conducting your physical inventory of real property (Our ltr 6440/6500 Financial Health-Real Property, 2/10/98). We will be providing additional information on conducting surveys and requesting updates of your progress.

If you have any questions, please call Joel Biren on (703) 235-3321.

/s/Clyde Thompson

CLYDE THOMPSON  
Deputy Chief for Operations

Enclosures

cc:  
Lands  
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CR

*Author: pp, jbiren, 03/12/1998 04:39pm*  
*Concur: pp, bpowell, 03/16/1998 09:59am*  
*Concur: pp, pballard, 03/16/1998 10:47am*  
*Concur: pp, bpowell, 03/20/1998 07:20am*