

Emergency Temporary Group Housing Site Selection Guidelines
Minimizing Environmental/Historic/Safety Problems
FEMA HQ, Regions 4 and 6
Hurricane Katrina

The speed with which a Group Housing site can be brought on line is closely related to ranking the following categories with (1) being the most preferred sites and (6) being the least preferred:

- (1) Existing RV/Mobile Home Parks and campgrounds with pre-existing RV hookups.**
- (2) Paved areas where utilities will be above ground.** Examples include parking lots and paved areas at conference centers, shopping malls, airports, drive-in theaters, business parks, military bases, etc.
- (3) Construction of apartments within existing, structurally sound building.** Examples include abandoned schools, warehouses, office buildings, base facilities, etc.
- (4) Public property (federal/state/local-owned) that has been previously disturbed, cleared and/or prepped for planned construction, or sites on regularly maintained grass lawn.** Examples include land being developed for public housing, public office buildings, city parks, ball fields, county agricultural centers, military bases, schools, etc.
- (5) Private property that has been previously cleared and prepped for planned construction, or sites on regularly maintained grass lawn.** Examples include land being developed for housing, shopping centers, business parks, and agricultural fields.
- (6) Public or private property that has not been previously cleared and prepped for construction but is located in developed, residential or urban areas.**
- (7) Public or private property that has not been previously cleared and prepped for construction, and is not located in developed, residential or urban areas.**

Be aware of conditions that appreciably increase review, construction and safety problems such as:

- a. **Floodplains.** Select sites outside of the 100-year floodplain, and make sure they have adequate stormwater drainage systems. If connected to existing sewer systems, ensure enough capacity exists.
- b. **Hazardous materials and contamination.** Consider whether the site has the potential for hazardous materials. Is it located in a commercial, industrial, or landfill area? Are there above-ground or underground storage tanks in the vicinity? What are the adjoining land uses? What is the potential for hazardous materials in air (smokestacks, pesticides/herbicides), water (industrial sewage, wastewater, disease), or land (contaminated soil, gas tank leaks) that could affect the health of future residents.
- c. **Open water and wetlands.** Avoid locating temporary housing on top of or next to open water and wetlands. These are sources of water-borne disease, child safety, and other hazards, and can often create costly construction difficulties.
- d. **Utilities.** Sites should be selected with access to existing utilities (e.g., power, drinking water, wastewater, telephone). If connected to existing utilities, ensure enough capacity exists.
- e. **Proximity to services.** Efforts should be made to locate temporary housing near existing supermarkets, public transportation, schools, health care facilities, etc.
- f. **Safe road access.** Can the existing roads handle an increase in traffic from temporary housing at the site? Is the ingress and egress safe for residents and other pedestrians and drivers?
- g. **Security.** Consideration should be given to the security at the temporary housing site, including the level of crime in the area, and what steps can be taken to make the site secure (e.g., fencing, security personnel, etc.).