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United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 11101.15
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COMMAMANDANT INSTRUCTION 11101.15

Subj: CRITICAL HOUSING AREAS (CHA)

Ref: (a) Title 37 U.S.C. § 403
(b) Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) Vol 1, par. U8005B

1. PURPOSE. To provide a better understanding of the policy and criteria governing the establishment, disestablishment, and continuance of Critical Housing Areas (CHA). To provide service members with application procedures for housing allowances under the Critical Housing Area policy.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure that the provisions of this Instruction are followed. Internet Release Authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None
4. BACKGROUND. There are many areas where both military family housing and community housing are in short supply. In some places, housing is in such short supply that service members are forced to leave or place their family members at other locations. Under the Regulations established by references (a) and (b), the Secretaries of the uniformed services may authorize Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) at rates other than for members' permanent duty stations (PDS) when it has been determined that amounts of government or civilian family housing are insufficient to meet requirements in the vicinity of the military installation. All housing offices are required to participate in the DOD annual BAH data collection process. The market data collected through this effort is critical to the BAH rate-setting process. BAH data collection affords information about the availability of civilian housing and can be used to help support CHA determination.

DISTRIBUTION – SDL No.

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

5. PROCEDURES. Commandant (G-WPM) has overall responsibility for implementing the CHA program for the Coast Guard.
 - a. Commandant (G-WPM) will:
 - (1) Make final determinations regarding the policy and criteria.
 - (2) Review CHA designations annually in January.
 - (3) Publish a CHA list annually and issue updates whenever an area is added or deleted from the list.
 - b. Commanders, Maintenance and Logistics Commands will:
 - (1) Issue implementing directives as necessary in support of the stated policies and other pertinent directives from higher authority.
 - (2) Ensure Housing Authorities are aware of CHA eligibility.
 - (3) Evaluate and endorse correspondence forwarded for conformance with criteria contained in this Instruction.
 - (4) Review criteria of designated CHA to ensure continued eligibility and forward results to Commandant (G-WPM-4) copying their respective Area Commanders by 1 January annually.
 - (5) Where appropriate, ensure requests for continuation of CHA designation address the consideration of planning documentation (*i.e.*, problem statement) to correct the housing deficit.
 - (6) Evaluate and submit Military Housing Areas (MHA) adjustments and recommendations, if needed, in conjunction with required CHA designation.
 - c. Coast Guard Area Housing Authorities will:
 - (1) Submit to Commandant (G-WPM-4), via their respective MLC (p), requests for CHA designations, providing supporting documentation as defined below. Enclosure (1) is a CHA Criteria Worksheet to be completed and submitted with each request for CHA designation.
 - (2) When evaluating data for the CHA Criteria Worksheet (Encl. 1) criteria (1) – (2), a 3-year average will normally be used. Data may be taken from the following sources: Military owned and controlled family housing utilization reporting from the Housing Management Information System (HMIS), current BAH survey data, chamber of commerce data, etc. Enclosure (2) is a flowchart detailing the processes for requesting CHA designation. In cases where there will be a definite and substantial change in station requirements (*i.e.*, homeport

changes), projected requirements may be used. In such cases, detailed explanation and justification must be provided.

- (3) If an area does not meet the stated criteria, CHA designation may be requested based on other considerations such as affordability of private sector community housing. Documentation such as a market analysis of rental units within a commuting distance of not more than two hours per round trip, housing referral service data or other pertinent evidence supporting the request for CHA designation must be provided.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURES.

- a. Members with dependents who execute a permanent change of station (PCS) to a permanent duty station (PDS) designated as a CHA may elect to either:
- (1) Relocate their dependents to another civilian housing location and effective upon their PCS reporting date, request to Commandant (G-WPM-2) to receive BAH and if applicable, CONUS COLA based on their new dependents' locations, or;
 - (2) If the dependent will continue to reside in the vicinity of the member's previous PDS and will not relocate incident to their sponsor's PCS, request upon their PCS reporting date, to receive the BAH rate applicable to their previous PDS. By law, CONUS COLA may only be paid at the rate for the dependents location or new PDS. CONUS COLA cannot be authorized for a previous PDS location.
- b. Upon written authorization by Commandant (G-WPM-2), the servicing PERSRU shall initiate payment at the indicated rates. These rates will remain in effect until any of the following occur:
- (1) The member executes a PCS from their PDS.
 - (2) The member separates from active duty.
 - (3) The member's dependency status changes.
 - (4) The member's dependents relocate out of the MHA or County Cost Group for which payment is authorized.

7. POLICY. Coast Guard policies with respect to CHA are as follows:

- a. A geographic area may be considered to be a CHA if it meets the following criteria:
- (1) Net utilization of military family housing exceeds 98 percent. Conversions to unaccompanied personnel housing must be annotated in the request.
 - (2) Overall vacancy rate for rental units in the private market is less than 3 percent.

- b. An area may be designated as a CHA for specific paygrades. For example, if personnel E-6 and below meet the criteria in Paragraph 7a, the Area Housing Authority may request CHA designation specifically for these paygrades.
 - c. Tenant commands will automatically be included in the CHA designation for the host command. Where practicable, CHA designation will be applied regionally.
 - d. A list of current CHA will be issued annually by ALCOAST in February by Commandant (G-WP).
8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT and IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this Instruction and determined to be not applicable.
9. FORMS/REPORTS. None

Thomas F. Fisher /s/
Acting Director of
Personnel Management

Encl: (1) CHA Criteria Worksheet
(2) CHA Flowchart

Critical Housing Area Flowchart

