

# Frequently Asked Questions McMurdo Housing Plan from the Science Community

For Response to Query Only  
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## **Q: Why is NSF changing the McMurdo Station housing plan?**

**A:** A high-level external review of the U.S. Antarctic Program's logistics and infrastructure was recently completed.

That report, *More and Better Science in Antarctica through Increased Logistical Effectiveness*, is available on the Web here: [http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/usap\\_special\\_review/usap\\_brp/rpt/index.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/usap_special_review/usap_brp/rpt/index.jsp)  
See section 4.8: "Human Care."

During Antarctic site visits, the independent Blue Ribbon Panel that drafted the report made note of issues with housing program-wide, but also of inefficiencies in the existing McMurdo housing arrangements.

They pointed out, for example, that individuals were living six-to-a-room in Building 155 and that many dorms were under-used. Their report also called for NSF to consider grouping people whose jobs and hours were similar together and also to consider a "science dorm."

NSF has also received feedback through the USAP supervisory organizations and science community as part of the outbrief process.

Accordingly, NSF will be taking a much more active role in management of McMurdo housing and focusing on the need to make long-term changes over the next five years, including making creating more single rooms, which will require a renovation plan and thus relocation during renovation.

The net result, NSF believes, will be an improvement in accommodations for all personnel.

## **Q: Was there other community input on the new plan?**

**A:** Scientists were represented on the Blue Ribbon Panel. Members of the Panel also spoke with members of the McMurdo community on several occasions.

## **Q: What is the dorm renovation plan?**

**A:** The NSF expects the dorm renovations to take up to five years.

During the 2012-2013 austral summer, we will renovate dorm space in building 155. This renovation focuses on improving carpet, drapes, paint, and furniture to include reintroduction of wardrobes. Over the 2013 winter, rooms in dorm 210 will be converted to single rooms to house aircrew with crew-rest requirements. These rooms will be smaller, and the switch to single rooms in 210 will decrease housing density in other dorms. Dorm 209 will begin renovations during the winter to replace all plumbing, improve fire sprinkler systems, paint, carpet, and replace all furniture.

NSF's long-term goal is to actively reduce McMurdo population in line with the recommendations of the external review. This reduction will also help alleviate crowding in the dorms.

**Q: I have accumulated a lot of points toward housing preference based on seniority, will that be taken into account in room assignments?**

A: No. From now on, housing assignments will be made on the basis of the amount of time a deploying person is expected to spend on-station.

**Q: As a grantee, what dorm can I expect to be living in?**

A: During the 2012-2013 season, most grantees will live in dorms 203A, B, and C. They may also be assigned rooms in building 155, "Hotel California" and "Mammoth Mountain Inn", as needed. As renovations proceed in future seasons, dorm assignments will likely change.

**Q: I'm a PI and have lived in dorm 208 or 209 for many seasons. Why am I being moved, and why does a new person get to live in these dorms?**

A: To group people with similar jobs in the same building. NSF is housing contractors who reside in McMurdo all season in dorms 206-209.

This grouping will help ASC better manage bed space and will relieve the stress of rotating roommates and awkwardness for transient residents moving into someone's regular room. Dorms 206-209 will be brought to and maintained at maximum density throughout the season.

**Q: How many roommates should I expect to have?**

A: Grantee rooms will be configured to accommodate up to three people. Three-person rooms are intended primarily for science teams that are in transit to field locations. For grantees spending several months in McMurdo, we will make every effort to limit to a single roommate.

**Q: I need to use my room as office space, since there isn't enough desk space in the Crary Lab. Can I do this?**

A: Yes. The 203 dorms are wired for access to the USAP network.

**Q: I have heard that I will not be able to choose my roommate. Is that true?**

A: It is not true. You will be able to request a specific roommate. Such requests will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: I would like to have a contractor as my roommate. Will this be possible?**

A: Yes. These requests will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, to determine whether the particular situation can be accommodated. Grantees spending the entire season at McMurdo will have more flexibility. But grouping people with similar occupations remains an overarching goal of the new policy.