

Great Plains United Methodist Conference

PARSONAGE DAMAGE POLICY

(addendum to Parsonage Standards by Cabinet)

The care of parsonages by pastors and their families is a sacred trust between a pastor and the congregation, as well as a trust among the pastors of the Great Plains Annual Conference. Accidents do occur, and most pastors demonstrate their care and good stewardship by addressing such incidents with the local church Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) and Board of Trustees (Trustees) and repairing the damage. Occasionally, however, the parsonage is not maintained by the pastor, and damage is not repaired. When that trust is broken, it severs relationships and impairs the effectiveness of the negligent pastor and future pastors to lead the congregation.

The Great Plains Cabinet takes such violations seriously and, based on the Care of Parsonage in the Great Plains Parsonage Standards, will hold to the following actions and expectations:

1. **At any time** when there is parsonage damage in excess of normal wear and tear by the pastor and the pastor does not take responsibility for repair of the damage, the local church SPRC or Trustees shall inform the District Superintendent and provide documentation of the damage. An agreement shall be reached with the church by which the pastor will cover the cost of all repairs. A report will be filed in the pastor's permanent file in the district office, and a written warning will be given to the pastor.
2. **When the pastor is moving out**, a representative of SPRC and a representative of Trustees shall do a walk-through inspection of the parsonage **at least one month prior to the move date** so that arrangements may be made for any necessary repairs. If damage is determined to be the responsibility of the pastor, a plan for payment shall be signed by all parties prior to the pastor receiving his or her final paycheck. The pastor, SPRC representative and Trustees representative shall also complete an inspection after the pastor's possessions have been removed from the parsonage, following the instructions of the Parsonage Standards. Adjustments may be made in the damage report and payment plan at this time if further damage is discovered.
3. **If the pastor is found to have damaged a second parsonage** in excess of normal wear and tear, the pastor's future appointability will be reviewed by the Cabinet. The District Superintendent may file an Administrative Complaint against the pastor resulting in punitive action such as a required damage deposit for future parsonage occupancy, removal of the privilege of living in a parsonage with no housing allowance provided, or involuntary exit from ministry.