

CRITICAL HOUSING AREAS (CHA)



**COMDTINST 11101.15B
September 2024**

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23 SEP 2024

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTIN 11101.15B

Subj: CRITICAL HOUSING AREAS (CHA)

Ref: (a) Pay and Allowances of the Uniformed Services, 37 U.S.C. § 403

1. PURPOSE. To provide policy and criteria governing the establishment, disestablishment, and continuation of Critical Housing Areas (CHA).
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chief of headquarter directorates must comply with the policies contained.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Critical Housing Areas (CHA), COMDTINST 11101.15A is hereby cancelled.
5. DISCUSSION. There are many areas within the Continental United States (CONUS) where military and community housing are in critical short supply. In these areas members may experience difficulty locating suitable housing. Reference (a) authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to determine whether a geographic area meets the criteria of this Instruction for designation as a CHA for Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) purposes.
 - a. Accompanied members in receipt of Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders or are assigned to a location that is later designated a CHA whose dependents do not accompany them may request to leave their primary dependent at a previous location or relocate them to an area outside the vicinity of their new Permanent Duty Station (PDS). If approved members will receive BAH, and if applicable Cost of Living Allowance in the Continental United States (CONUS COLA) for their primary dependent's location.
 - b. Accompanied members in receipt of PCS orders, or who are assigned to a location that is later designated as a CHA whose primary dependent accompanies them to a location outside the vicinity of their new PDS may request a waiver to receive BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA for their primary dependents' location.
 - c. Unaccompanied members in receipt of PCS orders, or who are assigned to a location that is later designated as a CHA may request to reside in a location outside the vicinity of their new PDS and receive BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA for the location of

their residence. Residence must be within a reasonable commuting distance (RCD) of members PDS. RCD is defined as a round-trip travel time of two hours or less during peak commute times. Members choosing to reside beyond the RCD where single type housing is available will only be entitled to BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA for a location where single type housing is available within the RCD. If single type housing is not available within the RCD, members may request BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA, for a location beyond the RCD.

- d. In all cases, housing data must support that a housing shortage existed at the time a member reported to the PDS.
 - e. Payment of BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA is not retroactive and will be effective upon approval of member's request.
 - f. Members who relocate their dependents or household goods before a location is designated a CHA, are not authorized an additional government funded move.
6. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to, nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
7. MAJOR CHANGES. This revision reflects policy changes to allow members assigned to a PDS that is later designated a CHA to request BAH, and if applicable CONUS COLA for a different location, it expands CHA policy to include unaccompanied personnel, updates organizational naming conventions of responsible headquarters and Commandant (CG-PSC) programs and converts the CHA designation or CHA continuation worksheet to an official CG Form and now includes unaccompanied and single type community housing.
8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. It is recommended the reader become familiar with the directives and publications noted throughout this Instruction and are listed in numerical series order:

U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series);
 Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities,
 COMDTINST 5212.12 (series);
 Civil Engineering Manual, COMDTINST M11000.11 (series).

9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47) reviewed this Commandant Instruction and the general policies contained within and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. This Commandant Instruction will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the action proponent to evaluate all future specific actions resulting from this policy for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other applicable environmental requirements, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).

10. DISTRIBUTION. Electronic distribution in the Directives System Library. Intranet/Pixel Dashboard: Directives Pubs, and Forms - PowerApps (appsplatform.us). If Internet released: Commandant Instructions (uscg.mil), Coast Guard Forms (uscg.mil) .
11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series) and the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center Microsoft SharePoint site at: <https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/cg61/SitePages/CG-611-RIM.aspx>.
12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. Commandant (CG-1M) has overall responsibility for implementing the CHA program for the Coast Guard.
 - a. Commandant (CG-1MD) is the CHA designation and CHA continuation approval authority.
 - b. Commandant (CG-1M2) will:
 - (1) Update CHA policy as needed to correspond with other policies and guidance received from higher authority; and,
 - (2) Evaluate CHA designation requests and CHA continuation requests to ensure compliance with the criteria in this Instruction, make a recommendation for approval/disapproval to Commandant (CG-1MD).
 - c. Commander, Coast Guard Personnel Service Center will:
 - (1) Ensure Housing Authorities are aware of CHA eligibility criteria;
 - (2) Evaluate initial CHA designation requests to ensure compliance with the criteria in this Instruction, make recommendation for approval/disapproval to Commandant (CG- 1M2);
 - (3) Annually evaluate CHA continuation requests to ensure continued compliance with the criteria in this Instruction, make recommendation for approval/disapproval to Commandant (CG-1M2) no later than 1 January;
 - (4) Where appropriate, ensure requests for continuation of CHA designation address correcting the housing deficit (i.e. problem statement) per the Civil Engineering Manual, COMDTINST M11000.11 (series);
 - (5) Where affordability is a concern, evaluate and submit Military Housing Areas (MHA) adjustment requests to Commandant (CG-1M2) in conjunction with CHA designation or continuation requests;
 - (6) Publish CHA designation list annually by ALCGPSC message no later than 28 February; and
 - (7) Update CHA designation list when an area is added or deleted throughout the year.

- d. Area Housing Authorities (AHA) will evaluate CHA designation requests and CHA designation continuation requests to ensure compliance with the criteria in this Instruction, make recommendation and forward with any supporting documentation to Commandant (CG-1MD) through Commander (PSC-PSD-hms) and Commandant (CG-1M2). Appendix (A), the Critical Housing Area (CHA) Designation and Continuation Request Form, CG-11101 is required supporting documentation with all CHA designation and CHA continuation requests.
13. CRITERIA. A command may request an area be designated as a CHA for either or both accompanied and unaccompanied members when military family housing occupancy, unaccompanied personnel housing (UPH) occupancy, and unaccompanied personnel leased housing (UPLH) occupancy exceeds 98 percent, and the overall vacancy rate for rental units in the private market for accompanied and unaccompanied personnel is less than 3 percent. Data must support a lack of family and single person housing availability for CHA designation requests.
 14. PROCESS. Commands may request CHA designation and CHA continuation through their AHA. Appendix A, the Critical Housing Area (CHA) Designation and Continuation Request Form, CG-11101, is required as supporting documentation for all CHA designation and continuation requests. Appendix B and Appendix C include flowcharts that describe the process for requesting CHA designation.
 - a. When evaluating data to complete Appendix A, a three year average will normally be used to determine military and private sector vacancy rates. Data may be taken from the following sources: Military owned and controlled housing utilization report from the Housing Management Information System (HMIS), current BAH data collection results, chamber of commerce data, or other housing referral services. Projected requirements may be used in locations where there will be a definite and substantial change in station requirements (e. g., homeport changes) or projected commercial or industrial changes that will affect private sector rental family housing availability. In such cases, a detailed explanation and justification must be provided.
 - b. Tenant commands will be included in the CHA designation for the host commands. Where applicable, CHA designation will be applied regionally.
 - c. Areas that do not meet the CHA criteria may request designation 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.
 - d. Due to changes in housing market conditions and the utilization of government quarters, areas previously designated as a CHA must be reviewed annually to ensure the criteria supporting the original designation remains valid. Areas that no longer meet the criteria or do not confirm a continued need for CHA designation will be removed from the CHA designation list. Members in receipt of PCS orders to areas removed from the CHA designation list can no longer request BAH and CONUS COLA, if applicable, based on their primary dependents' locations or an unaccompanied member's residence. However,

members previously approved BAH based on an area's designation as a CHA will continue to receive the approved BAH and if applicable, CONUS COLA rate until an event outlined in Paragraph 15.a through 15.d. of this Instruction occurs.

15. AWARENESS. To promote awareness of CHA housing options, in addition to the CHA list published by the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center, units located within areas designated as CHA's must update their Coast Guard Portal Unit Fact Sheet, along with all other Coast Guard approved social media sites to indicate their designation as a CHA. Updating Coast Guard Portal Unit Fact Sheets and social media sites will provide additional opportunities for members to identify units designated as CHAs when completing their E-Resume. This will also alert members of any areas they may experience difficulties in locating family housing and prevent undesired family separations and financial hardships.
16. MEMBER APPLICATION. Upon receipt of PCS orders to a unit designated as a CHA, or designation of a member's current PDS as a CHA, members may submit a Critical Housing Area (CHA) Designation and Continuation Request Form, CG-11101 to Commander, Personnel Service Center (PSC-PSD-hms) with a request to:
 - a. Not relocate their primary dependent from a location not in the vicinity of member's previous PDS, and request to receive the BAH rate and, if applicable CONUS COLA based on the primary dependent's previous location, effective upon the members reporting date at the new PDS;
 - b. Not relocate their primary dependent from the vicinity of the member's previous PDS and request to continue to receive the BAH rate and, if applicable CONUS COLA for their previous PDS, effective upon the members reporting date at the new PDS;
 - c. Relocate their dependents to another civilian housing location and request to receive BAH and, if applicable, CONUS COLA based on their dependent's new location, effective upon the members reporting date at the new PDS; or
 - d. Reside in a location outside the vicinity of an unaccompanied members PDS and request to receive BAH and, if applicable, CONUS COLA for the location of the members residence. Use block 13 of the Housing Allowance Protection Worksheet, CG-2025A to request BAH, and if applicable, CONUS COLA for the location of an unaccompanied members residence.
17. AUTHORIZATION. Upon written authorization by Commander, Personnel Service Center (PSC-PSD-hms) the servicing personnel office shall initiate payment at the indicated rates. These rates will remain in effect until any of the following occur:
 - a. The member executes a PCS from their PDS;
 - b. The member separates from active duty;
 - c. The member's dependency status changes; or,
 - d. The member's dependents relocate out of the MHA or County Cost Group for which payment is authorized.

18. UNACCOMPANIED PERSONNEL HOUSING. AHAs may assign accompanied members whose primary dependent does not reside with them in the vicinity of the PDS to vacant UPH transient rooms, at or below the minimum adequacy standards for members grade or rank, at no cost on a space-available basis only. When a transient room or bed is needed by an authorized UPH resident, the member must vacate within 3 days at their own expense.
19. FORMS. See List of Select Forms as Appendix A. Suggested changes and/or corrections for immediate action may be submitted to USCG.Forms@uscg.mil.
20. SECTION 508. This policy is created to adhere to accessibility guidelines and standards as promulgated by the U.S. Access Board with consideration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) requirements. If accessibility modifications are needed for this artifact, please communicate with the Section 508 Program Management Office (PMO) at Section.508@uscg.mil. Concerns or complaints for non-compliance of policy and/or artifacts may be directed to the Section 508 PMO, the Civil Rights Directorate (<https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/>) for the Coast Guard, or to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at accessibility@hq.dhs.gov.
21. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Units and individuals may recommend changes via the chain of command to: HQS-SMB-CG-Housing@uscg.mil.

/MICHAEL W. RAYMOND/
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for Military Personnel

Appendix A. List of Select Forms

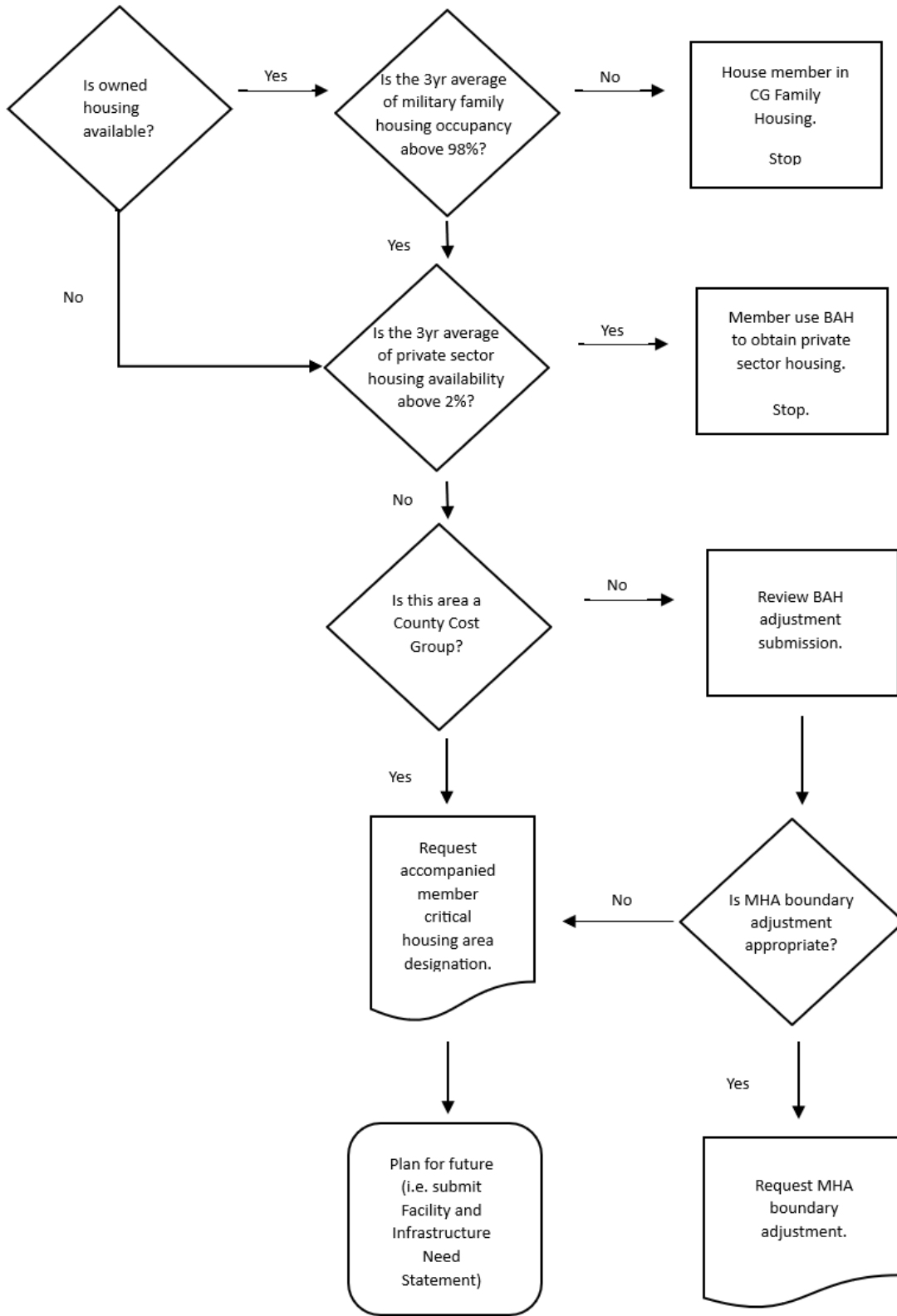
Appendix B. Critical Housing Area Flow Chart for Accompanied Members

Appendix C. Critical Housing Area Flow Chart for Unaccompanied Personnel

Appendix A. List of Select Forms

1. **Official Coast Guard Forms.** Retrieve the latest version from the Directives System Library. Internet/Pixel Dashboard: Directives Pubs, Forms, and GM - Power Apps (appsplatform.us) . If internet released: www.dcms.uscg.mil/forms/.
 - a. CG-11101, Critical Housing Area (CHA) Designation and Continuation Request
 - b. CG-2025A, Housing Allowance Protection Worksheet

Appendix B. Critical Housing Area Flow Chart for Accompanied Members



Appendix C. Critical Housing Area Flow Chart for Unaccompanied Personnel

