

Annex 15.4.E: Remission of rent and utilities contribution for substandard accommodation overseas – submission of applications (This Annex is policy guidance)

Guidelines for the post and the applicant

An employee's application is to include:

- a. supporting documentation outlined in the checklist at the end of this Annex.
- b. certification by post that there is no suitable accommodation within the employee's entitlement available at the posting location.
- c. a recommendation from the senior ADF representative on the level of remission warranted; and
- d. advice on plans to provide suitable accommodation for the employee.

The Checklist provided at the end of this Annex is to be used when applying for a remission of rent and utilities contribution. All relevant information is to be provided to enable an authorised person to make a decision on the amount of remission, if any, that should be granted.

Accommodation

1. If an authorised person is satisfied that an employee's accommodation and/or utilities are deficient, he or she may remit such part of the employee's rent and utilities contribution as is commensurate with the level of the deficiency. In making this decision the authorised person must have regard to the criteria in [subclause 15.4.23.3](#).
2. The guidelines for the size and configuration of accommodation provided overseas are provided in [Annex 15.4.C](#). The size range provides for differing family compositions and representational responsibilities. If accommodation is not suitable for representational purposes it is an administrative issue which should be resolved by the program/project manager. It is not a disability factor to be rectified by rent remission.
3. With regard to the design/configuration of the accommodation, the employee's application will need to demonstrate that the accommodation is having an adverse effect on the employee's and/or their dependants' wellbeing. A design is not deficient simply because it reflects local convention and is different from Australian norms.
4. The following points should be considered before making a decision on the amount of remission, if any, that should be granted as a consequence of a size deficiency in the accommodation.
 - a. Although there is a specified range of areas given for the overall size of a residence which may be applicable to an employee, this range is only provided to give flexibility in catering for the differing family compositions and representational responsibilities of employees serving overseas.
 - b. the same reasons apply to the range of floor area stipulated in respect of the entertainment areas (lounge/dining rooms.) This range caters specifically for the additional space that is required for representational purposes.

- c. An employee with no official representation role should, under normal circumstances, be required to occupy a residence in the lower range of the applicable area scale.
- d. An unaccompanied employee, with no dependants at the overseas location or no dependants eligible for reunion visit purposes, should not expect to occupy accommodation with more than two bedrooms.
- e. The size of other accommodation occupied by Commonwealth personnel (APS and ADF) serving at the same location in similar circumstances should be used to enable a comparison to be made.

Conditions of accommodation

1. Before deciding on any remission for deficiencies in the accommodation, the following points should be considered.
 - a. As there is an element of hardship allowance which compensates for deficiencies in the condition of accommodation — the score, if any, awarded under Parts A, C & F of Section 6 of the hardship allowance questionnaire.
 - b. The steps being taken to rectify the problem, eg maintenance or repair of the accommodation.
 - c. Any rooms in the accommodation that are not suitable for habitation, eg a small bedroom that can only be used as a study or storeroom because it is too small or because there is maintenance work being undertaken
2. Consideration for the surroundings/neighbourhood of the accommodation should take into account privacy aspects, playground facilities, environmental problems and location. As hardship allowance compensates for deficiencies in the surroundings of the accommodation, the score awarded under Part B of Section 3 and Part E of Section 6 of the hardship allowance questionnaire would need to be taken into account.

Nature and quality of utilities

1. Before a remission for utilities can be considered, it will have to be demonstrated that the problems are residual after all practical steps to alleviate them have been taken by the post and program/project managers.

Examples: Power failure - installation of generators; **water services** - installation of water purifiers, arranging the supply of bottled water; **garbage collection** - hired assistance such as gardeners, supply of furnaces, use of private organisations.
2. As there is an element of hardship allowance to compensate for deficiencies in the supply of utilities provided to the accommodation, the authorised person will need to know what score, if any, has been awarded under Parts C and F of Section 6 of the hardship allowance questionnaire.

Checklist

Item	Additional information	Checklist
1.	Type of accommodation - Have you provided details, including photographs, of the type of accommodation you are occupying - is it privately leased, government-owned, host country married quarters etc?	
2.	Duration of remission - Have you provided justification to substantiate the duration being sought - is this application attempting to rectify a short- or long-term problem?	
3.	Have you listed what action is being taken to rectify the problem(s)?	
4.	If your location receives a rate of DPA, have you checked with your post administration section to find out what score has been awarded & included this in your submission?	
5.	<p>Have you provided the following information, which should include photographs wherever possible, giving the size and configuration of your accommodation?</p> <p>Residence - (Floor plans are to be provided showing actual overall area size, layout & quality of residence including lobbies and approaches etc)</p> <p>Master bedroom (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Ensuite in Master bedroom (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Bedroom No. 2 (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Bedroom No. 3 (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Bedroom No. 4 (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Bedroom No. 5 (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Study (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Bathrooms (Y/N, number & size)</p> <p>Reception Room (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Dining Room (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Family Room (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Entrance Hall (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Kitchen (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Laundry (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Storage Facilities (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Garage (Y/N & size)</p> <p>Overall area size guidelines - Have you included what the guidelines specify as being the overall area size range applicable to you?</p> <p>Entertainment area size guidelines - Have you included what the guidelines specify as being the total Dining and Family room size range applicable to you?</p>	
6.	Have you provided documentation to show there is a deficiency in the standard and nature of the utilities provided to your accommodation? (This would include information regarding the supply of electricity - brownouts/blackouts; garbage services - are there regular collections? Is there a local dump, sewerage and water services?)	

7.	Do you have any problems associated with the construction and maintenance of your accommodation such as dangerous electrical wiring, hazardous sewerage and drainage etc?	
8.	<p>Do you have any of the following appliances in your accommodation which have been supplied by the owner/agent or at Commonwealth expense:</p> <p>Vacuum cleaner Floor polisher Electric fans Room heating Air-conditioning Air-cooling (evaporative). Humidifiers/dehumidifiers Light fittings (Lamps etc) Folding tables Fire extinguishers Smoke detectors Fire screens/fire irons</p>	<p>YES/NO YES/NO YES/NO</p>
9.	<p>Are there any other deficiencies, not specified above, but which you consider are directly associated with your accommodation? For example:</p> <p>lack of recreation & local facilities (eg. local parks playgrounds, public recreation facilities); lack of parking facilities (secure, covered etc); apartments/flats compared with to residences with private garden areas; general standard of the neighbourhood; problems with security (personal and property); limited access to walks, drives, lifts etc.</p>	<p>YES/NO YES/NO YES/NO YES/NO YES/NO YES/NO</p>
10.	Has the senior ADF representative, or if you consider it appropriate, post administration, provided support to your application and recommended a level of remission considered reasonable for the standard of accommodation you are occupying?	YES/NO
11.	Have you included photographic evidence in support of your application?	YES/NO