

ATTACHMENT B
Standards for Mobile Housing Applicable to Shepherders and Goatherders

I. PROCEDURES

Occupations involving shepherding/goatherding generally require workers to live in remote housing of a mobile nature, rather than “a fixed-site farm, ranch or similar establishment.” This type of housing is typically referred to as mobile housing. For purposes of these special procedures, mobile housing is any housing that is capable of being moved from one area on the open range to another. The employer must provide housing at no cost to the H-2A workers and those workers in corresponding employment who are not reasonably able to return to their residence within the same day.

Where housing for work performed on the range is provided, the regulations at 20 CFR 655.122(d)(2) require that such housing meet standards of the DOL Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In the absence of such standards, range housing must meet guidelines issued by OFLC. Due to the fact that OSHA standards currently do not cover mobile housing, Section II of this attachment establishes the standards for determining the adequacy of employer-provided mobile housing for use on the range.

Both mobile housing and fixed-site farm or ranch housing may be self-certified by an employer. Employers must submit a signed statement to the SWA and the Chicago NPC with the application for labor certification assuring that the housing is available, sufficient to accommodate the number of workers being requested, and meets all applicable standards. However, any other type of housing used by an employer to house the workers engaged in shepherding/goatherding activity must meet the standards applicable to such housing under 20 CFR 655.122(d).

SWAs must develop and implement a schedule which ensures that each employer’s self-certified housing is inspected no less frequently than at least once every 3 years. These inspections may be performed either before or after a request is submitted for nonimmigrant workers on the open range. Before referring a worker who is entitled to such housing, the SWA office must ensure that the housing is available and has been inspected in accordance with the inspection schedule. If the SWA determines that an employer’s housing cannot be inspected in accordance with the inspection schedule or, when it is inspected, does not meet all the applicable standards, the Chicago NPC may deny the H-2A application in full or in part or require additional inspections in order to satisfy the regulatory requirement.

II. MOBILE HOUSING STANDARDS

An employer may use a mobile unit, camper, or other similar mobile vehicle for housing workers that meets the following standards:

A. Housing Site

Mobile housing sites shall be well drained and free from depressions in which water may stagnate.

B. Water Supply

1. An adequate and convenient supply of water that meets standards of the state health authority shall be provided. The amount of water provided must be enough for normal drinking, cooking, and bathing needs of each worker; and
2. Individual drinking cups shall be provided.

C. Excreta and Liquid Waste Disposal

1. Facilities shall be provided and maintained for effective disposal of excreta and liquid waste in accordance with requirements of the state health authority or involved Federal agency; and
2. If pits are used for disposal by burying of excreta and liquid waste, they shall be kept fly-tight when not filled in completely after each use. The maintenance of disposal pits must be in accordance with state and local health and sanitation requirements.

D. Housing Structure

1. Housing shall be structurally sound, in good repair, in sanitary condition and shall provide protection to occupants against the elements;
2. Housing, other than tents, shall have flooring constructed of rigid materials easy to clean and so located as to prevent ground and surface water from entering;
3. Each housing unit shall have at least one window which can be opened or skylight opening directly to the outdoors; and
4. Tents may be used where terrain and/or land regulations do not permit use of other more substantial mobile housing which provides facilities and protection closer in conformance with the Department's intent.

E. Heating

1. Where the climate in which the housing will be used is such that the safety and health of a worker requires heated living quarters, all such quarters shall have properly installed operable heating equipment which supplies adequate heat. In considering whether the heating equipment is acceptable, the Chicago NPC shall first determine if the housing will be located in a National Forest Wilderness Section as specified in the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. §§ 1131-1136). Such a location has a bearing on the type of equipment practicable, and whether any heavy equipment can be used. For example, the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. § 1133(c)) restricts certain motorized or mechanical transport on certain roads in wilderness areas. The U.S. Forest Service has regulations for this at 36 CFR Part 293. Aside from the above, other factors to consider in evaluating heating equipment are the severity of the weather and the types of protective clothing and bedding made available to the worker. If the climate in which the housing will be used is mild and not reasonably expected to drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit continuously for 24 hours, no separate heating equipment is required if proper protective clothing and bedding are made available;

2. Any stoves or other sources of heat using combustible fuel shall be installed and vented in such a manner as to prevent fire hazards and a dangerous concentration of gases. Portable electrical heaters may be used, and if approved by Underwriters' Laboratory, kerosene heaters may be used according to manufacturer's instructions. If a solid or liquid fuel stove is used in a room with wooden or other combustible flooring, there shall be a concrete slab, insulated metal sheet, or other fireproof material on the floor under each stove, extending at least 18 inches beyond the perimeter of the base of the stove;
3. Any wall or ceiling within 18 inches of a solid or liquid fuel stove or stove pipe shall be made of fireproof material. A vented metal collar shall be installed around a stovepipe or vent passing through a wall, ceiling, floor or roof; and
4. When a heating system has automatic controls, the controls shall be of the type which cuts off the fuel supply when the flame fails or is interrupted or whenever a predetermined safe temperature or pressure is exceeded.

F. Lighting

1. In areas where it is not feasible to provide electrical service to mobile housing, including tents, lanterns shall be provided (kerosene wick lights meet the definition of lantern); and
2. Lanterns, where used, shall be provided in a minimum ratio of one per occupant of each unit, including tents.

G. Bathing, Laundry and Hand Washing

Movable bathing, laundry and hand washing facilities shall be provided when it is not feasible to provide hot and cold water under pressure.

H. Food Storage

When mechanical refrigeration of food is not feasible, the worker must be provided with another means of keeping food fresh and preventing spoilage, such as a butane or propane gas refrigerator. Other proven methods of safeguarding fresh foods, such as salting, are acceptable.

I. Cooking and Eating Facilities

1. When workers or their families are permitted or required to cook in their individual unit, a space shall be provided with adequate lighting and ventilation; and
2. Wall surfaces next to all food preparation and cooking areas shall be of nonabsorbent, easy to clean material. Wall surfaces next to cooking areas shall be of fire-resistant material.

J. Garbage and Other Refuse

1. Durable, fly-tight, clean containers shall be provided to each housing unit, including tents, for storing garbage and other refuse; and
2. Provision shall be made for collecting or burying refuse, which includes garbage, at least twice a week or more often if necessary. Refuse disposal shall conform to Federal, state, or local law, whichever applies.

K. Insect and Rodent Control

Appropriate materials, including sprays, must be provided to aid housing occupants in combating insects, rodents and other vermin.

L. Sleeping Facilities

A separate sleeping unit shall be provided for each person, except in a family arrangement. Such a unit shall include a comfortable bed, cot, or bunk with a clean mattress. When filing an application for certification and only where it is demonstrated to the Certifying Officer that is impractical to set up a second sleeping unit, the employer may request a variance from the separate sleeping unit requirement to allow for a second worker to temporarily join the shepherding/goatherding operation. The second worker may be temporarily housed in the same sleeping unit for no more than three consecutive days and the employer must supply a sleeping bag or bed roll free of charge.

M. Fire, Safety and First Aid

1. All units in which people sleep or eat shall be constructed and maintained according to applicable state or local fire and safety law;
2. No flammable or volatile liquid or materials shall be stored in or next to rooms used for living purposes, except for those needed for current household use;
3. Mobile housing units for range use must have a second means of escape. One of the two required means of escape must be a window which can be easily opened, a hatch, or other provision. It must be demonstrated that the custom combine worker would be able to crawl through the second exit without difficulty;
4. Tents are not required to have a second means of escape, except when large tents with walls of rigid material are used. A heater may be used in a tent if the heater is approved by a testing service, such as Underwriters' Laboratory, and if the tent is fireproof; and
5. Adequate fire extinguishers in good working condition and first aid kits shall be provided in the mobile housing.