



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

DIRECTOR'S ORDER #36: HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Approved: _____
Director

Effective Date: February 21, 2024

Duration: Until amended, superseded, or rescinded

This Director's Order (Order), together with Reference Manual 36 (RM-36), supersedes and replaces the August 5, 2009, edition, and any other conflicting guidance. This Order and RM-36 supplement the guidance found in [section 9.4.3](#) (Employee Housing) of National Park Service (NPS) *Management Policies* (2006).

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1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Background

The NPS defines Government-furnished housing (GFH) as housing units owned or leased by the Government for which the Government serves as landlord, or lease holder. GFH may be rented to NPS employees, employees of other Department of the Interior (DOI) bureaus, employees of other Federal agencies, or non-Federal tenants. The word "furnished" in the term GFH means a housing unit provided by the Government, and does not imply that the Government provides furniture, appliances, equipment, or other household effects.

The designation and use of GFH must be approved by the Director (or delegated authority). Only units recorded in the [Internet Quarters Management Information System](#) (iQMIS) are

considered part of the GFH inventory. GFH must remain in the iQMIS inventory when occupied or when future occupancy is planned.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Order is to provide operating policies for managing GFH. It clarifies provisions of *Management Policies*, and establishes specific policy to:

- ensure consistency in application and adherence to public laws, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, and DOI policies pertaining to GFH;
- manage GFH with an approach that considers all aspects of park operations, the park mission, and applicable NPS policies and requirements;
- rely upon the local community to supply housing whenever feasible;
- describe the conditions under which GFH is required;
- provide GFH that is safe and sanitary, sited to avoid natural hazards whenever possible, integrated into the park environment and, to the best extent possible, energy efficient and cost-effective to maintain;
- follow applicable building and code requirements, including accessibility, in renovation of existing, and construction of new, GFH; and
- support alternatives to GFH where it would be economically feasible and meet the park's mission.

This Order applies to management actions carried out within the framework of park General Management Plans, Annual Performance Plans, and Housing Management Plans (HMPs).

This Order also applies to those establishing new GFH programs. For parks that do not currently have a GFH program but need to establish one, the superintendent should adhere to the guidelines set forth in this Order and RM-36.

2. Authorities

2.1 Authority for this Director's Order

Authority to issue this Order is contained in the National Park Service Organic Act and other NPS laws ([54 USC 100101](#) *et seq.*), and delegations of authority contained in [Part 245](#) of the DOI Manual.

This Order is intended only to improve the internal management of the NPS and is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

2.2 Other Authorities

Authorities governing GFH include:

Statutes:

- [5 USC 5911](#) and 5911 note (in particular, section 320 of Pub. L. 98-473 ([98 Stat. 1874](#)), as amended)
- [5 USC 5536](#)
- [40 USC 3312](#)
- [42 USC 4151](#) (section 1 of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968)
- [42 USC 4321–4370d](#) (National Environmental Policy Act of 1969)
- [42 USC 11411](#) (section 501 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)

- [54 USC 101331–101340](#)
- [54 USC 300101](#) *et seq.* (National Historic Preservation Act)

OMB Circulars:

- [A-11](#), Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget
- [A-25](#), User Charges
- [A-45](#), Rental and Construction of Government Housing

Regulations and DOI Guidance:

- [36 CFR part 68](#) (The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties)
- [41 CFR Chapter 102, Subchapter C – Real Property](#) (Federal Management Regulation)
- [DOI Housing Management Handbook](#)

3. Policies

3.1 Required and Permitted Occupancy

Consistent with [section 9.4.3.2](#) of *Management Policies*, eligible tenants of GFH may include NPS employees, concession employees, volunteers, researchers, essential cooperators, and employees of another Federal agency.

3.1.1 Required Occupancy

As per 5 USC 5911(e), an agency may not require an employee to occupy GFH unless the agency head “determines that necessary service cannot be rendered, or that property of the Government cannot adequately be protected, otherwise.” It is the responsibility of the superintendent to recommend to the regional director the positions required to live at the park to meet the desired levels of safety, deterrence, protection, and emergency response. Regional directors must approve required occupancy.

In rare cases, a superintendent may be a required occupant (RO) if the position meets the criteria and the Director approves the designation.

ROs may be permanent employees (i.e., services are needed year-round) or seasonal employees (i.e., additional services are needed during high-peak season or other intervals). Required occupancy is connected to the position, not the person in the position. A position cannot be designated an RO unless all of the following criteria are met:

- Occupancy is required for the provision of a necessary service or for the protection of life and property. (The NPS interprets “life” as meaning human life.)
- The position is directly involved in emergency response per the employee’s official position description.
- The employee cannot perform the assigned emergency response duties in a timely manner without residing in GFH.

3.1.2 Permitted Occupancy

Permitted occupants may be provided with GFH after (1) required occupancy needs are met and (2) all alternatives to providing GFH have been explored and found to be infeasible.

3.2 Determining Housing Need

It is the policy of the NPS, in compliance with 5 USC 5911, that employees (other than ROs) live in private sector housing unless housing in the private sector is unavailable or unaffordable within a reasonable commute.

- Unavailable, for permanent employees, means there is (1) no local rental market within a reasonable commute or (2) there is a local rental market but the amount and type of units is insufficient. Unavailable, for seasonal tenants, means there is no entity willing to rent a unit with lease terms approximating the number of months that seasonal employees generally work at each park and during peak season for park visitation.
- Unaffordable means an employee in the position's wage and grade would pay more than 30 to 35 percent of their monthly gross income in rent (including insurance, taxes, and utilities).
- A reasonable commute means approximately one hour and not more than two hours, under normal commuting conditions, from the local rental market to where the employee reports to work. This Order's definition of reasonable commute is distinct from travel/per diem guidelines.

When housing in the private sector is unavailable or unaffordable, a park will provide only the amount of GFH necessary to support operations. Superintendents must justify the amount of GFH needed based on operational impact and cannot add GFH without the approval of the regional director and the Director (or delegated authority).

Alternatives to Providing GFH in Parks. Superintendents will fully explore and pursue alternatives including leasing and/or public/private partnerships (see [Director's Order #89: Acquisition and Management of Leased Space](#), and [Director's Order #38: Real Property Leasing](#)). When alternatives are found viable, cost effective, and appropriate, superintendents will implement the alternatives before using or acquiring GFH in parks.

3.3 Adding Housing Capacity

The cost to the Government to acquire, operate, maintain, and manage GFH typically far exceeds the value of rental receipts collected. For this reason, a superintendent cannot add housing capacity unless the addition has been justified through a business case. Further, per the DOI Housing Management Handbook, the superintendent must conduct a housing needs assessment (HNA) to ascertain the need for proposed additional GFH. An HNA consists of the following components:

- identifying required occupants;
- conducting a staff analysis of potential permitted occupants;
- reviewing the existing portfolio;
- analyzing the local market including but not limited to the nearest established community; and
- determining need.

Superintendents are prohibited from acquiring or converting mobile homes and trailers for use as GFH on a permanent basis. Any request to use mobile homes and trailers as a temporary way to satisfy housing needs must be in writing, and approved by the Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands (AD-PPFL). Such requests will be accompanied by a completed Form 10-373: Add Housing to the iQMIS. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The AD-PPFL's approval will expire after five years unless otherwise specified.

Prototype Housing Design Catalog. The NPS employs standard building designs and specifications to improve planning, design, and construction of GFH. The standard designs can be found in the Prototype Housing Design Catalog (Design Catalog). The Design Catalog provides stick-built, prefabricated, and modular construction options that comport with accessibility requirements, life and safety codes (i.e., sprinklers, horns, alarms), sound minimum

(i.e., Sound Transmission Class and Indoor Transmission Class), and the International Building Code.

- **Minor Design Changes:** A superintendent may adapt the designs to fit specific park requirements with consideration for a particular site, climate, or visual quality. However, the superintendent should justify the adaptations as cost-effective, necessary, and compatible with the park area. An example of a minor design change is using a pitch roof in an area with high precipitation instead of a flat roof.
- **Significant Modifications:** A superintendent may request to use a significantly modified design from the Design Catalog. An example of a significant modification is adding or subtracting square footage from the design. Significant modifications require a value analysis review (see Value Analysis section below). Additionally, the Housing Program Support and the Major Construction Division (MCD) will conduct a desk audit of the modified design. The MCD may require the modified design be reviewed and approved by the AD-PPFL to ensure it is a sound facility investment.
- **Exceptions to Use of the Design Catalog:** A superintendent may request an exception to using the Design Catalog. The AD-PPFL reviews these requests. The AD-PPFL will only consider the exception if there is justification for a substantial need to use a different floor plan or design, or the alternate design provides substantial cost savings. Design exceptions require a value analysis review.

Construction Cost Model. The superintendent will use the Construction Cost Model to generate a preliminary cost estimate to build new, or replace existing, GFH. The superintendent uses the outputs of the Construction Cost Model to present the concept of the project.

Washington Support Office (WASO) Housing Program Support may ask project teams to justify cost estimates significantly above or below Construction Cost Model estimates.

Value Analysis. The NPS uses the principles of value analysis (see [Director's Order #90: Value Analysis](#)). All projects to replace or construct new GFH must undergo value analysis if the project does not use a design from the Design Catalog or if significant modifications are made to the prototype design.

Form 10-373. Once a new or leased GFH unit is ready for occupancy, the superintendent seeks approval to add the unit to the housing inventory via Form 10-373: Add Housing to the iQMIS. The form must be approved before adding the GFH unit to iQMIS. Before the Director or delegated authority approves the form, the superintendent must demonstrate that the structure is in good condition and has a Certificate of Occupancy.

3.4 Developing a Housing Management Plan

Each superintendent with GFH will complete a park-specific HMP. The HMP includes information on operations (e.g., managing data and the budget), maintenance (e.g., how the park intends to maintain GFH in good condition), and working with tenants (e.g., how the park assigns GFH, keeps tenants informed, and ensures tenants abide by their Housing Assignment Agreements). To ensure the plan contains necessary information, parks are required to use the HMP template.

An HMP must be updated and approved every five years. An HMP may be amended if significant changes to the park's GFH program occur. Significant changes may include, but are not limited to, new staffing needs, local market changes, public-private partnership opportunities, acquisition of in-holdings, and boundary expansion.

The park must have a current and approved HMP on file to be eligible for project fund sources.

3.5 Managing the Operations of the Housing Program

Housing Rental Income. Superintendents must ensure that rents are collected consistent with OMB Circular A-45 and DOI guidelines. Per 5 USC 5911 note, rental income must be dedicated exclusively to the operation and maintenance of GFH. Accordingly, superintendents must use rental income to maintain GFH in good condition prior to using the funds for other housing program costs.

Rental income must be kept in a special fund for the operation and maintenance of GFH. The Service-wide rental income management strategy encourages parks to fully utilize rental income for housing needs.

Data Maintenance and Annual Certification. The iQMIS is the DOI system of record for GFH, setting of rental rates, and payroll deductions for rent. It provides management information to OMB, DOI, and to those that support the housing management program at the national, regional, and park levels.

All GFH must be recorded in iQMIS with only two exceptions: (1) trailer pads used exclusively for unpaid staff members; and (2) short-term leases (i.e., less than 12 months) used exclusively for unpaid staff members. The Regional Housing Manager will submit exceptions for annual review to WASO Housing Program Support.

Superintendents must certify the accuracy of their park's iQMIS data annually per the DOI Housing Management Handbook.

Entering false values to obtain lower rental rates is strictly prohibited by 5 USC 5536, and concerns about data manipulation related to housing will be referred to the Inspector General's Office.

Conflicts of Interest and Restrictions on Tenant Involvement in the Rent-Setting Process.

A conflict of interest occurs when an employee (or their family member or other relative) involved in the rent-setting process occupies GFH. Therefore, the park's iQMIS users must identify any tenants of GFH who are also involved in rent setting. For every conflict of interest identified, the regional iQMIS Data Manager must review the tenant's rental calculation and document the review on the User Conflict of Interest Rent Approval Form (found in iQMIS).

Competencies for Key Staff. Park and regional employees responsible for the management of housing must understand the laws, regulations, policies, software systems, rent setting, and other relevant topics to ensure accountability for their housing responsibilities.

Records Management Requirements. Superintendents will maintain an accurate and current records system for housing management in accordance with [Director's Order #11D: Records and Electronic Information Management](#) and the [Service-wide Records Schedule](#). Documents and records will be used to demonstrate compliance with this Order and all applicable laws and policies.

3.6 Working with Tenants

Eligibility. Eligibility to occupy GFH must be determined without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, family medical history (including genetic information), status as a parent, marital status, political affiliation, and illegal retaliation. Refer to 42 USC 4151 and [Director's Order #16D: Equal Employment Opportunity and Zero Tolerance of Discrimination](#) for more information.

Housing Assignment Agreements. The tenant – including volunteers and unpaid staff members – must sign a Housing Assignment Agreement (lease).

No Assignment or Subleasing. GFH will be used for residential purposes only. It will not be assigned or sublet by the occupant in whole or in part, or listed or advertised for use or occupancy through any online platform, regardless of whether compensation is offered to or received by the occupant.

Business Activity. No one may conduct a commercial or home-based business activity on GFH premises without prior written approval by the superintendent.

Tenants Reconsideration and Appeals. Federal tenants have the right to contest many aspects of their GFH situation, with the exception of eviction. Federal tenants are allowed to submit a request for reconsideration. Upon denial of a request for reconsideration, Federal tenants have the right to appeal. Non-Federal tenants do not have the same rights.

Check-in and Check-out Inspections. GFH units will be inspected by the tenant and a park employee designated by the superintendent before the premises are occupied or vacated.

3.7 Maintaining Government-Furnished Housing in Good Condition

The superintendent will ensure GFH is safe and sanitary, sited to avoid natural hazards whenever possible, integrated into the park environment and, to the best extent possible, energy efficient and cost-effective to maintain.

Asset Management. Superintendents must manage GFH in accordance with real property asset management principles found in [Director’s Order #80: Real Property Asset Management](#). As a real property asset, GFH is managed according to life-cycle management practices and principles and accounted for in the official NPS accounting and property systems. Use of standardized guidelines to determine the condition of assets enables managers to prioritize actions that improve operational and financial management and make life-cycle cost estimates associated with the prioritized actions. See Director’s Order #80.

In addition to federally mandated laws and regulations, parks may also be required to abide by applicable State and local laws and regulations.

Standards for GFH. The superintendent will maintain each GFH unit in good condition (both interior and exterior) as defined by iQMIS but no worse than fair condition. When a unit is deemed to be in fair condition (as defined by iQMIS), the superintendent has two years to bring the unit back into good condition using rental income or other appropriated funds.

GFH in poor condition (either interior or exterior) must be brought into good condition within three years through rehabilitation or replacement. GFH units in poor condition for more than three years trigger an audit of the park’s housing program.

GFH units in obsolete interior or exterior condition cannot be used. GFH in obsolete condition (either interior or exterior) must be brought into good condition through rehabilitation or replacement. No new tenants may be assigned to obsolete units, and current tenants must be provided with a different housing unit within 120 days of the unit being identified as obsolete.

Annual Inspections. Per DOI and NPS requirements, the superintendent must annually conduct:

- **A housing inspection.** The DOI Housing Management Handbook states “each GFH unit will be inspected annually by facility/maintenance personnel to ensure that the housing is

decent, safe, sanitary, and energy efficient; and to identify and correct maintenance deficiencies.”

- **A condition assessment.** NPS asset management guidance requires each GFH unit receive an annual condition assessment based on current business practices. The results of the condition assessment are used in rent setting.

Accessibility. Federal law requires that employees with disabilities have access to the same services and opportunities provided to all other employees. These requirements include the provision of accessible housing. For more information, see 42 USC 4151, [Director’s Order #16A: Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants and Employees with Disabilities](#), and RM-36.

The basic requirement for single-family homes, multiplex units, apartments, and dormitories is that at least one of each type of new GFH construction (on a housing-area-by-housing-area basis) is designed and built to be accessible. At least five percent, but not less than one unit, of the total number of units must provide mobility features for mobility impaired persons.

In addition, at least two percent, but no less than one unit, of the total number of units must provide communication features for persons with hearing or vision impairments.

Housing Improvement Program Funds. Housing Improvement Program Funds are appropriated Construction funds approved by the AD-PPFL for distribution to the field through the WASO Budget Office. Housing Improvement Program Funds support the Housing Improvement Program for the replacement of trailers and obsolete GFH, major rehabilitation of existing GFH, the addition of housing capacity where needed, and the removal of excess GFH.

Superintendents may use other appropriated funds sources to maintain GFH in good condition. Projects must comply with this policy and fund source requirements as described in the Service-wide Comprehensive Call.

Rehabilitation Cost Model. The superintendent will use the Rehabilitation Cost Model to generate a preliminary cost estimate to rehabilitate a GFH unit. The superintendent uses the outputs of the Rehabilitation Cost Model to present the concept of the project. WASO Housing Program Support may ask project teams to justify cost estimates significantly above or below Rehabilitation Cost Model estimates.

Historic Structures. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), specifically [54 USC 306101\(a\)\(2\)](#), and [Executive Order 13006](#) require each Federal agency – prior to acquiring, constructing, or leasing buildings – to use, to the maximum extent feasible, historic properties available to it whenever operationally appropriate and economically prudent. The NHPA also requires each agency to implement alternatives for the adaptive use of historic properties it owns if that will help ensure the properties’ preservation. Use of historic structures for GFH may be suitable after the superintendent has demonstrated a need for housing and all other alternatives have been explored.

3.8 Replacing Government-Furnished Housing

The superintendent can pursue replacing GFH under the following circumstances:

- The cost to repair the GFH unit exceeds the cost to replace it;
- The footprint and layout of the existing structure does not meet the needs of the park;
- The cost to repair and/or improve the GFH unit utility systems exceeds the cost of replacing the GFH unit near functioning, year-round utilities; or

- The cost of mitigating risks (e.g., flood, rockfall, and wildfire) exceeds the cost of replacing the GFH unit in a centralized housing area outside the risk/hazard zone.

Replacement projects abide by the guidelines for new construction (see section 3.3) and disposition (see section 3.9).

3.9 Disposing of Government-Furnished Housing

In compliance with the intent of 5 USC 5911, OMB Circulars A-11 and A-45, and the DOI Housing Management Handbook, it is NPS policy to promptly dispose of any GFH units not essential to accomplishing the mission of the Service. GFH units should not be retained for use merely because they are available.

All disposition activities will comport with (1) regulations promulgated by the General Services Administration concerning the utilization and disposal of real property, as found in the Federal Management Regulation, and (2) 42 USC 11411.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Director:

- is responsible and accountable for management of GFH Service-wide but may delegate as appropriate;
- reviews and approves required occupancy certifications for superintendents, deputy superintendents, and other positions as necessary (see section 3.1);
- reviews and approves requests to add GFH capacity; and
- certifies the NPS's iQMIS housing inventory annually.

4.2 Associate Director, PPFL:

- oversees WASO Housing Program Support, which manages the operational (and other delegated) responsibilities of the housing program Service-wide;
- provides guidance on sound investment decisions related to GFH;
- ensures the use of electronic information systems for the purposes of GFH management and operations, such as iQMIS, the Facility Management Software System (FMSS), and the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS); and
- issues, and updates and revises as necessary, RM-36.

4.3 WASO Housing Program Support:

- Interprets and monitors implementation of GFH policy Service-wide;
- serves as the liaison between DOI and the NPS housing program;
- collaborates with the Asset Management Program, Park Planning and Special Studies, the Denver Service Center, and other impacted groups and programs to leverage subject matter expertise and to ensure consistent approaches to housing management;
- monitors Service-wide adherence to laws and regulations that govern GFH;
- develops or provides training and technical assistance related to policies, standards, procedures, resources, tools, and best practices; and
- manages fund sources (as appropriate) that are available to support GFH.

4.4 Regional Director:

- provides support to the regional housing program (responsibility may be delegated, as appropriate);
- designates a regional housing manager to manage the operational (and other delegated) responsibilities of the regional housing program;

- through performance measures, monitors and holds superintendents accountable for appropriate management of GFH programs, including ensuring compliance with policy, effective use of housing funds, and monitoring the condition of GFH units;
- reviews requests to add housing capacity for approval by the AD-PPFL;
- provides guidance on sound investment decisions related to GFH;
- reviews and prioritizes GFH projects for regionally managed fund sources and before submission to national fund sources, to ensure that the region is fully aware and supportive of GFH projects;
- ensures positions designated as ROs meet the criteria in section 3.1. Reviews and approves required occupancy certifications except those that require Director approval;
- annually certifies the region's inventory of GFH for review by the Director; and
- assigns an employee (typically the regional housing manager) to serve as the iQMIS Data Manager.

4.5 Regional Housing Manager:

- shares with superintendents policies, standards, procedures, resources, technical assistance, tools, best practices, and training related to GFH;
- provides guidance and technical support to superintendents (or their designees);
- provides guidance and technical support to the Regional Director (or their designees);
- acts as a liaison between parks and WASO Housing Program Support for all GFH issues;
- monitors parks' plans for the expenditure of rental income carryover;
- coordinates with the Regional Facility Manager and other program managers on GFH issues and data quality;
- reviews and recommends for approval all park HMPs submitted to the Regional Director;
- coordinates regional priorities for Housing Improvement Funds;
- monitors parks' plans for the expenditure of rental income carryover;
- coordinates data verification efforts in FMSS and FBMS;
- provides data call status updates to WASO Housing Program Support;
- if serving as the iQMIS Data Manager, has the following responsibilities:
 - accepts access to and responsibility for specified data fields in iQMIS;
 - provides secondary verification and approval of data changes made by park housing management staff that impact the rental rate;
 - monitors data validation issues and contacts park housing management staff to resolve outstanding issues;
 - maintains and verifies certain data fields within iQMIS, such as the nearest established community, Consumer Price Index, and survey regions; and
 - reviews rental rates of superintendents and park housing management staff who reside in GFH.

4.6 Superintendent:

- is responsible and accountable for management of GFH at the park unit (responsibility may be delegated as appropriate);
- communicates, on at least an annual basis, to tenants on how the park spends rental income;
- with the help of park staff knowledgeable about facilities management, human resources, budget/administration, and other impacted programs:
 - manages the park's GFH in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies;
 - allocates resources to ensure that all GFH is in good or better condition;

- ensures equitable treatment for all GFH tenants;
- develops the HMP, and updates it at least every five years;
- seeks guidance and technical support from the region, as needed;
- ensures positions designated as ROs and permitted occupants meet the criteria in section 3.1;
- ensures the appropriate amount and type of GFH is available to support the operational needs of the park within current laws and regulations;
- uses rental income solely for the purpose of maintaining and managing GFH. Prioritizes housing projects and seeks funding as necessary;
- maintains accurate data, per established business practices, in iQMIS, FMSS, and FBMS for the purposes of GFH management and operations;
- reviews rental income and expenditures on a recurring basis;
- delegates an employee to serve as the iQMIS Housing Manager;
- ensures tenants are knowledgeable of their rights, roles, and responsibilities as tenants, including (1) providing them with the information needed to verify rental calculations, and (2) notifying them of any health or safety risks;
- ensures that accurate rents are collected and that tenants comply with the terms of their lease; and
- certifies the park's housing inventory annually for review by the regional director.

4.7 Tenant:

- reviews the lease for accuracy and signs it before occupying GFH;
- adheres to the terms of the signed lease, the park's HMP, and any directives issued by the superintendent;
- maintains the GFH in clean and safe condition, and notifies the appropriate park staff member of any unsafe condition or any critical maintenance need;
- provides timely and accurate information on GFH, when requested;
- pays all rent and bills promptly; and
- behaves in a manner that ensures a positive living experience for roommates, housemates, and the community of employees and others living in GFH.

5. Further Guidance

It is important to note that comprehensive housing management must consider other policies and guidelines specific to individual park missions and relevant program areas. Additional information can be found in RM-36.

-----*End of Director's Order*-----