

EMERGENCY ACCOMODATION AND ASSISTANCE



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1. Policy Intent

This George Municipal Emergency and Accommodation Assistance policy is derived from the National Emergency Housing Program which is provided for in National Housing Policy. The main objective of the policy is to provide temporary assistance in the form of rudimentary assistance in a wide range of emergency situations or exceptional need.

The implementation of this policy is subject to the availability of resources, as contemplated in S26 (2) of the Constitution of the RSA, within the municipality.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this policy is to facilitate initiatives that will ensure provision of emergency assistance relief to people in urban and rural areas, who find themselves in extraordinary situations. These situations may include, but will not be restricted to:

- a) Existing shelters destroyed or damaged by fire or flood or other natural disaster;
- b) Temporary relocation areas which serve as decanting sites for a housing development;
- c) Prevailing situation poses an immediate threat to their lives, health and safety; and
- d) In lawful evictions under the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, 1997 (ESTA) or the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 1998 (PIE) and where the Court orders George Municipality to provide alternative emergency accommodation to those affected.

There are three main categories of responses to be undertaken in emergency situations:

- a) On-site assistance;
- b) Relocation or resettlement; and
- c) Repair or rebuild housing.

The purpose of emergency accommodation and assistance is to provide temporary accommodation on a household level, which must be vacated by the beneficiary once suitable alternative accommodation or permanent accommodation opportunities are available, whether in terms of Council's Housing Programmes or private initiatives. Such emergency accommodation should never be seen as a permanent arrangement. Where the need is greater than the resources of the Municipality additional resources will need to be requested from the Provincial and National authorities.

This policy makes provision for two types of ~~temporary accommodation~~ assistance, both of which are dependant upon budget availability:

- a) Provision of gunplas (or another suitable material) for leaks; and
- b) Provision of a temporary structure.

When considering such cases the Municipality must consider:

- a) If land needs to be made available for this purpose;
- b) Whether funding has been obtained from the Provincial Department of Human Settlements for emergency accommodation assistance;
- c) The ability of the household to assist themselves; and
- d) Council's ability to assist towards emergency accommodation provision.

3. Definitions

3.1. Disaster: Refers to a disaster as proclaimed in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 57 of 2002.

3.2. Emergency accommodation: Refers to people who find themselves without shelter due to circumstances beyond their control which may include but not be restricted to:

- a) Becoming homeless as a result of a declared state of disaster or extraordinary circumstances, where assistance is required, including cases where initial remedial measures have been taken in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) by government, to alleviate the immediate crisis situation;
- b) Persons living in dangerous conditions such as on land being prone to dangerous flooding, or land which is dolomitic, undermined at shallow depth, or prone to sinkholes and who require emergency assistance;
- c) In the way of engineering services or proposed services such as those for water, sewerage, power, roads or railways, or in reserves established for any such purposes and who require emergency assistance;
- d) Require relocation to make way for a human settlements project; and
- e) Are evicted, through a Court Order, from land and /or unsafe buildings.

3.3 Temporary accommodation: Refers to a temporary non-permanent shelter.

4. Legal Provisions

Due cognisance is required to be taken of the legal provisions which govern the accommodation of extraordinary or emergency cases. The policy provisions may be summarised as follows:

- a) Section 27 (c) of Chapter Two of the Constitution provides that “everyone has the right to social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance”;
- b) Housing Act 107 of 1997;
- c) National Department of Housing, 2004: National Housing Programme: Housing Assistance in emergency Circumstances; and
- d) Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

5. Administrative Measures

5.1. Eligibility

In order to be eligible for emergency assistance the person(s) affected should not:

- a) Be able to address their housing emergency from their own resources; and
- b) Be able to access other forms of assistance such as insurance, bank loans or any other means.

Priority will be given to households which are primarily elderly (over 60), households with a permanently disabled person, where the whole household is unemployed, child-headed households and households without any formal structure.

Prior to being accommodated in terms of this policy, the beneficiary must complete the requisite application forms to apply to be on the official Human Settlements Demand Data Base.

5.2 Qualification criteria for assistance with an emergency structure

5.2.1 Who will be assisted

- a) Person who are evicted and the Court has ordered the municipality to provide accommodation.
- b) Households affected by fire and inclement weather rendering their structures unsafe and uninhabitable.

- c) Persons residing in formal houses which have been destroyed by fire where the house has been declared structurally unsafe by the Building Control Department.

5.2.2 Who will not qualify

- a) Persons residing on private property;
- b) Single persons under the age of 60 with no dependants ;
- c) Additions to existing formal houses;
- d) Households that have been assisted previously; and
- e) Persons who have illegally invaded land.

5.3 Qualification criteria for assistance with Gunplas (Micron Plastic) or any similar suitable material

5.3.1 Who will be assisted

- a) Persons residing in informal settlements in structures which, during an assessment, has been found to have serious leakages, and who are unable to assist themselves.

5.3.2 Who will not be assisted

- a) Single persons under the age of 60 with no dependants ;
- b) Persons residing on private property;
- c) Persons residing in formal houses;
- d) Households who have received assistance within past six months unless an assessment deems it necessary; and
- e) Persons who have illegally invaded land.

Gunplas (or any suitable material) is intended to cover a serious leak and not be roofing or building material. Hence there is no standard size for gunplas.

5.4 Permanent Accommodation

The beneficiary must consent that if, and when, permanent house/serviced plot can be provided, depending on the individual's eligibility for a first-time subsidy, he/she shall relinquish the emergency structure when instructed to do so. Should the beneficiary be able to find relief themselves they must relinquish the accommodation. The structure always remains the possession of George Municipality and the applicant shall acknowledge this at time of award.

5.5 Documentation required

5.5.1 The Deputy Director: Human Settlements is responsible for the collation of the following information (including proof) from beneficiaries:

- a) Full names and contact details of all the household members;
- b) Copy of identity documents;
- c) Pensioners (Proof of SASSA Grant);
- d) Proof of permanent physical disability;
- e) Deeds search and or printout from Housing Subsidy System;
- f) Confirmation from Financial Services that applicant is indigent;
- g) Employment details;
- h) The total monthly income of the household;
- i) The age of the minors; and
- j) Where the minors attend school;

5.5.2 In cases of a Court-ordered eviction the following information is required:

- a) The information required in 5.5.1;
- b) The certified copies of the ID documents of the adult members of the household;
- c) A copy of any marriage certificate;
- d) A copy of current pay slips; and
- e) The Order of Court which instructs the Municipality to provide temporary accommodation.

5.5.3 In cases of a fire incident, the following documents must be submitted before an emergency structure can be approved:

- a) The information required in 5.5.1;
- b) Fire Incident Report from the Fire Department;
- c) SAPD report of findings at the scene where fire occurred; and
- d) All documents in 5.5.1 (a-j) where applicable must accompany the official application form

6. **Application process**

Requests for assistance are to be submitted as follow:

- a) Requests for assistance the JOC office during office hours when activated.
- b) Applications can be submitted via the area offices. The area co-ordinators must load the application on the Collaborator System with all the required documentation.
- c) Applications can be made via the Human Settlements: New Housing Office, corner of St John and Varing Streets.

After working hours the request must be sent via the Fire Department.

8. Miscellaneous

The ownership of temporary shelters to be provided for emergency housing always vest in the George Municipality, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Accounting Officer.

Standard Operating Procedures will be adhered to for the distribution of gunplas, as well as for the provision of temporary structures.

Persons will remain on the list of applicants for assistance for a period of six months. Should persons still require assistance after six months they are required and responsible to inform the Department Human Settlements: New Housing Office.

9. Approval and Resolution

This policy is not retrospective.

This policy was approved by Council on 30 June 2022. Any deviation from this policy shall be approved by the Accounting Officer, after consultation with the Executive Mayor.