



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
BUREAU OF FORESTRY

**GUIDELINES FOR LEASED FOREST CAMPSITES**

**INTRODUCTION:**

These guidelines set forth the procedures for the leasing of State Forest land as authorized under Section 302 (b) (1) of Act 18 of 1995 known as the Conservation and Natural Resources Act. They are intended to guide both the person interested in obtaining an existing lease and the current LESSEE and their guests. The FOREST CAMP LEASE as executed is binding upon the LESSEE. However, these guidelines explain the terms of the lease and are intended to be fair, realistic and consistent with the proper management of State Forest land. Under no circumstances are any new leases being granted.

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A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **DEFINITIONS:** In these guidelines, the area of Commonwealth-owned land being leased is referred to as the "leased premises" or "the campsite". The word "improvements" includes all structures erected by the LESSEE including the cabin, latrine and any additional outbuildings, such as garages, sheds, etc. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry shall be referred to as "BUREAU" and the word "AGREEMENT" is referring to the Forest Camp Lease.
2. **DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE:** The management of the State Forest land in each Forest District is the responsibility of the District Forester and his staff. LESSEE and prospective LESSEES should contact the District Forester by letter or telephone for assistance with campsite matters. Because the District Forester and their staff spend much time out of the office, it is recommended that an appointment be made before visiting the office. The District Offices are open from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. (See section F for their addresses and telephone numbers.)
3. **PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENCY REQUIRED:** Forest Camp Leases may only be granted to Pennsylvania residents for health and recreation. A leased campsite address and/or a P.O. Box are not sufficient proof of PA residency. Therefore, the address provided to the BUREAU must be different than that of the leased campsite and if a P.O. Box is listed as the mailing address, the LESSEE must also provide the BUREAU with their residential (i.e. permanent) address, in order to satisfy the BUREAU'S residency criteria. The BUREAU also reserves the right to ask the LESSEE for other proof of Pennsylvania residency, if deemed necessary.
4. **USE AS A PERMANENT RESIDENCE PROHIBITED:** The cabin erected on the leased premises cannot be used as a permanent domicile or residence or for the conduct of any business. Any violation of this provision shall constitute a breach of the lease AGREEMENT and is sufficient grounds for termination of the AGREEMENT as set forth in the AGREEMENT.
5. **TERM OF LEASE:** Leases are granted for terms not exceeding ten (10) years. They may be renewed for additional terms at the discretion of the BUREAU.

6. **ONLY ONE LEASE PERMITTED:** No person may hold more than one lease or have a financial interest in more than one lease.
7. **SIZE OF LEASE:** Leased premises are usually about 100 feet by 100 feet (one-quarter acre).
8. **ANNUAL RENTAL:** The annual rental is set by the BUREAU. The BUREAU has the right to increase the rent at the end of any annual term by providing the LESSEE with 60 days advance written notice.
9. **TAXES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Buildings erected under a lease of State Forest land are considered as real estate for taxation purposes. It is the LESSEE'S responsibility to notify the County Treasurer or Tax Collector when he (the LESSEE) acquires a building on State Forest land and notify them of any changes of address. Local authorities can sell the buildings on a leased premises for non-payment of local taxes and this is sufficient cause for the BUREAU to terminate the lease.
10. **TERMINATION OF LEASE:** Leases may be terminated by the BUREAU on six months notice if the location is needed for higher public use.
11. **ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE:** The LESSEE may not assign the lease without prior written consent of the BUREAU. See Section B.
12. **ACCESS AND SECURITY:** The BUREAU assumes no responsibility for providing or maintaining roads for access to campsites, or for providing security for property.
13. **CONDUCT OF GUESTS:** The LESSEE is responsible for the conduct and action of their guests. A copy of the RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR STATE FORESTS and these GUIDELINES FOR LEASED FOREST CAMPSITES should be posted in every cabin. Violation of the RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR STATE FORESTS, the GUIDELINES FOR LEASED FOREST CAMPSITES as well as other laws of the Commonwealth including the Game Law can result in termination of the FOREST CAMP LEASE.
14. **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** The LESSEE or agent must notify the BUREAU, preferably the District Forester, within 14 days of any change in their address.
15. **GROUP LEASE:** Before a lease will be granted to a group (more than one person, not husband and wife) an organization must be formed and by-laws prepared and submitted to the BUREAU. These by-laws should provide for changes in membership, both additions and deletions. Notification of changes in camp officers must be accompanied by a copy of the resolution passed by the group. One dependable person must be selected by the group to act as agent for the group and to act as LESSEE. The Agent will be responsible for getting all documents and rental payments returned on time.
16. **JOINT OWNERSHIP:** If the lease is to be held by a married person, it is recommended that it be placed in the names of the husband and wife jointly.
17. **TERMINATION OF A LEASE:** If the lease is terminated, the improvements must be removed within ninety (90) days of the date of termination.
18. **LEASE RENEWAL:** Several months prior to the expiration date of the lease, the BUREAU will send the LESSEE the APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL. This form must be returned to the District Forester. Renewal of the lease is not automatic. In determining whether or not a lease will be renewed, the BUREAU must consider the performance of the LESSEE in adhering to the terms of the lease as well as the conduct of the LESSEE during the previous term of the lease.

19. SUBLETTING FOR A FEE:

- a. For purposes of these Guidelines, subletting is defined as the granting of the use of the cabin to others for a fee and is limited to a maximum of four (4) times during a calendar year, for no more than seven (7) days each time.
- b. Prior permission is needed to sublet. REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO SUBLET is used for this purpose and is available from the District Forester or the Harrisburg office of the Bureau of Forestry. It should be submitted in triplicate to the District Forester.
- c. Individuals subletting a cabin must comply with all Rules and Regulations and Guidelines that the Campsite LESSEE is subjected to.

20. MULTIPLE USE CONCEPT: All State Forest lands are managed under the multiple use concept. Therefore, timber sales may be conducted on State Forest lands surrounding campsites. However, living healthy trees adjoining campsites or other areas with high recreational or aesthetic values will be marked for cutting with discretion. The size of the area to be treated in a manner to preserve aesthetic values will vary according to location, topography timber type, condition of timber, etc.

B. ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE:

1. WHEN SELLING IMPROVEMENTS: The cabin and all other improvements located on the leased premises are the private property of the LESSEE or the group he represents. Therefore, the LESSEE, either acting as the individual cabin owner or as the agent for a group, may sell the cabin and the improvements at any time provided the purchaser intends to remove the cabin and the improvements from State Forest land.\* However, if the purchaser is to be granted a lease by the BUREAU for the continued use of State Forest lands, the following procedure must be used:
  - a. The LESSEE **must** submit REQUEST FOR ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE in triplicate, to the District Forester.
  - b. The BUREAU will notify the LESSEE with in a reasonable time frame, whether or not permission to assign the lease has been granted and if granted, under what conditions.
  - c. The BUREAU will send the LESSEE the three copies of ASSIGNMENT OF FOREST CAMP LEASE required to effect the change in LESSEE.
  - d. The LESSEE is required to show prospective purchasers his copy of the approved REQUEST FOR ASSIGNMENT OF LEASE, before the sale of the cabin and improvements can be finalized.
  - e. Before making final settlement, the present LESSEE and the purchaser shall complete the ASSIGNMENT OF FOREST CAMP LEASE form and submit it in triplicate to the District Forester.
  - f. If the assignment form is in order, a new lease will be prepared and sent to the purchaser for his signature. The purchaser, after signing properly, must return all copies for execution by the BUREAU, following which a fully executed copy will be returned to him as the new LESSEE.
2. WHEN CHANGING AGENT FOR A GROUP: If a lease is held by a group (more than one person, not husband and wife), one person, 18 years of age or older, acts as LESSEE or Agent for the group. It is required that one person act as Agent for the group for the term of the lease. The BUREAU suggests that the LESSEE or Agent provide an alternative contact person. This person should be affiliated with the group and

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\* Assignments of leases will not be approved if campsites do not have a habitable cabin constructed on them.

therefore must be a Pennsylvania resident. The purpose of having an alternative contact is to give the BUREAU a second person to contact in case the LESSEE or Agent cannot be successfully contacted.

- a. If the Agent for the group must be changed for any reason, AGREEMENT OF CONSENT TO ASSIGNMENT OF FOREST CAMP LEASE must be submitted, in triplicate, to the District Forester. The reason for requesting the assignment must be given.
- b. The lease may be assigned to any member of the group provided the previous Agent's signature is on the assignment form.
- c. Upon execution of the AGREEMENT OF CONSENT TO ASSIGNMENT OF FOREST CAMP LEASE by the BUREAU, the existing lease will be assigned to the new Agent for the group for the remaining period of the lease.

### C. BUILDING SPECIFICATIONS

1. PLANS REQUIRED: Plans for cabins to be rebuilt must be prepared by or be approved by a registered architect or engineer and then submitted to the BUREAU for final approval. Plans prepared by a commercial plan service can also be accepted. The BUREAU reserves the right to reject any building design submitted which is deemed inappropriate for use on State Forest land. The LESSEE or Agent will be responsible for obtaining any required local building permits and must comply with local building ordinances and/or the most up-to-date Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (Pa UCC).
2. BUILDING DIMENSIONS: The building dimensions must be in proper relation to each other so that the cabin has an attractive appearance.
  - a. The minimum width is 20 feet.
  - b. The minimum area, excluding porches, is 480 sq. ft.
  - c. The maximum area, excluding porches, is 1,000 sq. ft.\*
  - d. The height to square shall not be more than 9 ft., two story buildings will not be approved.
  - e. The maximum height of the cabin shall not be more than 18 ft from the top of the foundation to the apex of the roof.
  - f. Additions or alterations, which would cause a cabin to exceed the above-mentioned limitations, will not be approved.
3. ROOFS: All roofs, including those on the cabins, latrine, and any other outbuildings, must have a minimum pitch of 5 inches vertical for each 12 inches horizontal distance (5/12). The pitch of porch roofs may be different than that on the cabin provided the pitch is no less than 3 inches vertical for each 12 inches horizontal distance (3/12). Porch roofs that have less than a 5/12 pitch may not be enclosed.
4. FOUNDATIONS:
  - a. The cabin foundation must be masonry or concrete, either piers or walls, placed to a depth below frost level. Loose stones, loose concrete blocks, wooden posts and similar materials or construction cannot be used for cabin foundations.
  - b. The use of termite barriers on cabin foundations is recommended.
  - c. All buildings, including outbuildings, must be so constructed that all wooden portions of the structure are at least eight (8) inches above the ground, except in cases where treated lumber is used.

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\* If a porch is enclosed, the area will be added towards the total square footage.

- d. Basements are prohibited and will not be approved.
5. CHIMNEYS: Chimneys shall be fireproof and have an approved spark arrestor. Chimneys shall be constructed of stone, brick or concrete block on a concrete foundation below frost level and have a proper size flue liner. If used exclusively to vent a gas, oil heater, or a wood burner (i.e. pellet stove) the chimney/vent pipe may be made of components with an outer metal jacket and inner refractory wall manufactured according to specifications and standards on file with the Underwriters' Laboratory and subject to their inspection and approval.
6. WIRING: All electrical work installed shall comply with all laws, ordinances, rules and regulations of all local government authorities and the rules of the National Board of Fire Underwriters as interpreted by the enforcing authority having jurisdiction and the public utility. Electrical work shall be approved by the Middle Department Association of Fire Underwriters or any other approved inspector.
7. MATERIALS:
  - a. SIDING MATERIALS; must have quality of durability and neat appearance. Aluminum or vinyl siding of the proper color can be used. Newly developed types of siding can be approved, but samples and/or descriptive literature must be submitted to obtain approval. The use of roofing materials such as asphalt shingles and roll roofing for siding will not be allowed. Metal siding of an approved color and having a thickness of 28 gauge or thicker may be approved.
  - b. ROOFING MATERIALS, such as composite asphalt or fiberglass shingles, must have a Class A fire rating or higher and be of an approved color. The LESSEE will be responsible to provide the District Forester with the type and color of material that will be installed prior to its installation. If a cabin is being rebuilt, the roofing material and color will need to be indicated on the plans. Any roofing material that has been installed and would not have been approved by the BUREAU will have to be removed at the LESSEE'S expense. (Rolled roofing is an example of a roofing material that will not be approved for cabin roofs.) However, rolled roofing can be approved on porch roofs with a pitch less than 5/12 and must have a Class A fire rating. The rolled roofing material must also match the color of the shingles on the rest of the cabin roof.
  - c. METAL ROOFS of an approved color, material, and gauge (28 ga. or thicker) may be acceptable roofing material, provided the LESSEE gets written approval from the District Forester to install the specific materials.
8. COLORS: Colors approved for exterior surfaces (siding, trim, roofing, etc.) are forest green, brown, white, gray, black or natural stain. LESSEES should verify that the color they are planning on using is acceptable. Any unacceptable colors may need to be removed or painted at the LESSEE'S expense. (Redwood paint is an example of an unapproved color.)

#### D. OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFICATIONS

1. SANITATION:
  - a. In accordance with the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, the LESSEE shall obtain a permit or written permission from the local sewage enforcement officer for the installation or modification of the sewage disposal system. A copy of said permit or permission must be sent to the District Forester before the work begins. This includes outside toilets, or any structure in which a sewage disposal system is to be installed. All systems must be constructed within the surveyed boundaries of the leased campsite. Work on any structure or system must not be started until approval in writing is obtained. Septic systems with drain fields will not be approved or permitted.

Sewage Enforcement Officers (SEO) work for the local agency and are responsible for enforcing the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537) and the regulations promulgated there under with regards to sewage disposal systems (this includes gray water disposal systems as well). If a pressurized or piped water system is found connected to a cabin that does not have an acceptable means to dispose of gray water and or sewage, then the LESSEE will be required to remove the pressurized or piped water system at their expense.

- b. LESSEE shall have any holding tank (as defined in 25 Pa. Code 73.1 (9)) pumped out promptly whenever the contents reach 75 percent of the tank capacity. However, when requested to do so by the BUREAU, the LESSEE shall have the contents removed within thirty (30) days of such request. LESSEE shall furnish proof, satisfactory to the BUREAU that the contents were disposed of at an approved disposal site. In the event the LESSEE fails to have the holding tank pumped out as required above, the BUREAU may, instead of exercising its right to terminate the lease: (1) restrict all use of the cabin until the LESSEE is in compliance, or (2) in the event that the failure to comply results in nuisance hazardous to public health, have the tank pumped out with the LESSEE assessed for the cost. Failure by the LESSEE to pay these costs within thirty (30) days of presentment shall itself be sufficient cause to terminate the lease.
- c. The Pennsylvania Solid Waste Management Act prohibits the use of on-site garbage pits for garbage disposal. Consequently, all garbage, trash or other solid waste generated at the leased site must either be taken home or disposed of locally. All local disposal must be at a permitted solid waste disposal site, and/or in conformity with the local solid waste ordinance. Trash and garbage from campsites must not be deposited in State Park, State Forest Picnic Area or Department of Transportation refuse containers. Burning of trash or garbage on a leased campsite and on other State Forest land is prohibited.

## 2. OUTBUILDINGS, GARAGE, SHEDS, ETC.:

- a. In addition to the outdoor latrine, one (1) storage building (that must be detached from the cabin) may be constructed. It may not exceed 120 square feet in area and must, if practical, be similar to the cabin in construction and design. Siding, roofing materials and colors should match the cabin.
- b. The location of, and the plans for, such buildings must be approved in advance by the District Forester.
- c. LESSEE will be required to remove any outbuildings that is not being properly maintained.
- d. Pavilions are considered to be an additional outbuilding, thus a pavilion may be constructed provided the LESSEE does not already have an additional outbuilding and provided that its design does not exceed the 120 square feet restrictions and must be placed within the boundaries of the Leased Campsite. The location of and the plans for pavilions must be approved in advance by the District Forester.

## 3. WATER SUPPLIES:

- a. SPRINGS: Springs or streams may be used for water supply but no exclusive use can be granted. Improvements of springs must have the advance written approval of the BUREAU. Any waterlines that extend off of the leased campsite will require a License for Right-of-Way for Water Use. These can be obtained by contacting the District Forester and requesting an APPLICATION FOR RIGHT OF WAY. If a waterline is found connected to the cabin and if there is no acceptable means to dispose of the gray water present, the waterline will have to be disconnected (see section D. 1a. SANITATION). If an acceptable means to dispose of gray water exists, the waterline may remain, provided any required Water Use agreement is obtained, as previously stated.
- b. DRILLING OF WELLS: Written approval must be obtained before wells are drilled on the leased premises. Approval is not guaranteed and each situation is reviewed on a case by case basis. All well

drilling must be done in accordance with current regulations and standards of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Upon completion, a WATER WELL COMPLETION REPORT, prepared by the well driller, shall be furnished to the District Forester.

4. GATES: No chain or cable gates are permitted. Permanent gates may, under some circumstances, be permitted with the written approval of the District Forester. Gates that are permitted must be constructed and installed in accordance with the BUREAU'S standards and specifications. (Available through the District Office)
5. PLATFORMS, RAFTS, OR FLOATS: No off-shore devices such as platforms, rafts, or floats, whether free-floating or anchored, are allowed.
6. BOAT DOCKS: Construction of new docks or the replacement and/or major renovations to existing docks is prohibited. A dock permit must be renewed annually. Non-permitted docks are subject to removal by the Bureau of Forestry. Boat docks are non-transferable and will have to be removed before the completion of sale of a leased campsite cabin.
7. BOAT MOORING: Only State Forest Cabin LESSEES of the Delaware State Forest District are permitted to moor boats on State Forest Lakes and Ponds. To moor a boat overnight at a boat dock a mooring permit is required and available through the District Office. Boats may be moored from April 1<sup>st</sup> to November 14<sup>th</sup>. Overnight mooring of watercraft from November 15<sup>th</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> is prohibited. Mooring is limited to a maximum of two (2) watercrafts at the permitted boat dock and one (1) watercraft per mooring post.

The moored watercraft may be used for non-commercial and personal recreational purposes only. Mooring to trees is prohibited. Boat mooring will only be allowed at approved permitted boat docks and at approved mooring posts. Unauthorized boats are subject to removal by the Bureau of Forestry. Mooring posts are non-transferable and will have to be removed before the completion of sale of a leased campsite cabin. More specific information on the boat dock and mooring guidelines are available from the Delaware District Office.

#### E. BUILDING AND SITE MAINTENANCE

1. MAINTENANCE OF LEASED PREMISES: The improvements and the leased premises must be maintained in a clean and presentable manner at all times, and leases are granted subject to these requirements. The BUREAU will inspect all campsites every 2-4 years. Districts may elect to inspect camps more frequently, however, they are required to inspect them every 2-4 years. Any unsatisfactory conditions called to the attention of a LESSEE must be corrected.
2. REPLACEMENT OF MATERIALS TO CURRENT SPECIFICATIONS: Some of the older cabins do not meet current specifications with regard to materials used for siding and/or roofing. It is suggested that these unapproved types of roofing and siding be replaced as rapidly as possible. Such replacements will be required when the unapproved materials have outlived their usefulness or present an unattractive appearance.
3. MAJOR REPAIRS: All repairs, renovations, or additions must have prior written approval of the BUREAU. LESSEE must submit plans for the proposed work to the District Forester and work may not begin until his written approval is obtained. The work to be performed may not deviate from the original plans without prior written consent from the District Forester.

No addition will be approved that results in a cabin with more than 1,000 square feet of living space, excluding non-enclosed porches. If porches are enclosed, they will be added to the cabin's total square footage of living space. Porches that have a roof pitch of less than 5/12 may not be enclosed.

## 06.72 Group Leases

The Department only recognizes the following situations when entering into a lease agreement:

- a single person
- an individual and their spouse
- a single person representing a group
- a formally organized group

Campsite lessees are also encouraged but not required to provide the Department with an alternative contact person. This person's purpose is to provide the Department with a second point of contact in the event the Department cannot contact the listed lessee or agent. If a lessee does choose to provide an alternative contact person, then the Department should be provided with the individual's address and phone number. The alternate contact should also be directly affiliated with the camp. This information can be submitted at time of lease renewal on the renewal form or the lessee/agent may submit a separate written request if at a point in time other than renewal.

If a lease is held by a group (more than one person, but not an individual and their spouse), and the group is not legally organized, one person will act as lessee or agent for the group. All correspondence concerning a Leased Forest Campsite must be directed to the person acting as agent for the group. Thus, the camp agent's responsibility to keep other camp members involved is most important. If the agent is unable to continue in this capacity, the lease may be

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assigned to another member of the group by submitting an Agreement of Consent to Assignment of Forest Camp Lease, form FR0081. An Agreement of Consent to Assignment of Forest Camp Lease will only be approved if it has been completely filled out. The signature of the current agent must be provided on the line as indicated (see Section 06.4, Assignment of Lease When Changing Agent). If the change of agent is made at the time the lease is renewed, no assignment is needed. The lease may be placed in the name of the group, provided that there are a set of by-laws in place, which contain provisions on how to settle camp disputes. The Commonwealth will also require a list of officers for the group. The offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer cannot be held by the same person.

The lease can also be placed in the name of a group which is legally organized as a corporation, association, partnership, or trust. The organization must have a Board of Directors. Corporations in Pennsylvania are required by law to have a President, Secretary, and Treasurer. A set of by-laws is required to illustrate how the camp will function regarding adding and removing members, payment of fees, etc. In Pennsylvania, a corporation must file articles of incorporation with the Department of State. The agent for the group may be changed by submitting a Change of Agent, form FR0037 (Section 3), provided that there is no change of ownership or in the name of the lessee.