

Model licence conditions

Residential Caravan Sites

1994

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First published 1994*

CARAVANS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1963

Model Conditions 1994: Residential Caravan Sites

Introduction

1. Section 5(7) of the Act provides that the Department of the Environment may from time to time specify Model Conditions regulating the layout of, and the provision of facilities, services and equipment for, caravan sites or particular types of caravan site; and that in deciding what (if any) conditions to attach to a site licence the district council shall have regard to any conditions so specified.

2. Section 7(1) provides that on an appeal against any condition of a site licence a court of summary jurisdiction, if satisfied (having regard, amongst other things, to any conditions specified by the Department under Section 5(7)) that a condition is unduly burdensome, may vary or cancel the condition.

3. Section 21 which empowers district councils to provide caravan sites, provides, in sub-section (2), that in exercising their powers under the Section, the district council shall have regard to any condition that may have been specified by the Department under Section 5(7) of the Act.

4. In pursuance of its powers under Section 5(7) of the Act, the Department now specifies Model Conditions for residential caravan sites. These represent the standards normally to be expected as a matter of good practice. They should be applied with due regard to the particular circumstances of each site, including its physical character, any services or facilities that may already be available within convenient reach, and other local conditions.

5. These Model Conditions are for residential caravan sites, on which some or all the caravans are used as permanent residences by people other than travelling people or agricultural workers. They are not intended to apply to other types of caravan sites - for example, sites which only have holiday caravans. Separate Model Conditions, issued in June 1992, have been specified for 'holiday' sites.

MODEL CONDITIONS

Site Boundaries

1. The boundaries of the site should be clearly discernible on the ground either by reference to natural features or for example indication posts. It is recommended that at least a 3 metre wide area should be kept clear within the inside of all boundaries and that distances from boundaries should have regard to the character of the adjoining land.

A plan of the site layout should be given to the district council by the site operator or licence holder.

Density and Space Between Caravans

2. Subject to the following variations the minimum spacing distance between any two caravans should not be less than 6 metres. The point of measurement of porches, awnings, etc. is the exterior cladding of the caravan, excluding the draw bar. The distance from any part of a caravan to any part of a road within the site should not be less than 2 metres.

- Porches may protrude 1 metre into the 6 metres space and should be of the open type.
- Where awnings are used, the distance between any part of the awning and an adjoining caravan should not be less than 3 metres. They should not be of the type which incorporates sleeping accommodation and they should not face each other or touch.
- Eaves, drainpipes and bay windows may extend into the 6 metres space provided the total distance between the extremities of 2 adjacent units is not less than 5.25 metres.
- Where there are ramps for the disabled, verandahs or stairs extending from the unit, there should be 4.5 metres clear space between them and such items should not face each other in any space. If they are enclosed, they should normally be considered as part of the unit and, as such, should not intrude into the 6 metres space.
- A garage, a shed or a covered storage space should be permitted between units only if it is of substantially non-combustible construction (including non-combustible roof) and sufficient space is maintained around each unit so as not to prejudice means of escape in case of fire. Windows in such structures should not face towards the unit on either side. Car ports and covered walkways should in no circumstances be allowed within the 6 metres space. A garage or shed over 30 square metres in area will be subject to Building Regulations. For cars and boats between units, see paragraph 29.

3. The density should be consistent with safety standards and health and amenity requirements. The gross density should not exceed 50 caravans to the hectare,

calculated on the basis of the usable area (i.e. excluding lakes, roads, communal services and other areas unsuitable for the siting of caravans) rather than the total site area.

Roads, Gateways and Footpaths

4. Roads and footpaths should be designed to provide adequate access for fire appliances. (Detailed guidance on turning circles, etc. is available from the NI Fire Brigade.) Roads, of suitable material, should be provided so that no caravan standing is more than 50 metres from a road and each standing should be connected to a road by a footpath with a hard surface, the maximum gradient of which should be 1 in 12. Roads should not be less than 3.7 metres wide, or, if they form part of a clearly marked one-way traffic system, 3 metres wide. Gateways should be a minimum of 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum height clearance of 3.7 metres. Footpaths should not be less than 0.75 metres wide. Roads should have no overhead cable less than 4.5 metres above the ground. Roads and footpaths should be suitably lit taking into account the needs and characteristics of a particular site. Emergency vehicle routes within the site should be kept clear of obstructions at all times.

The surface and gradient of roads and footpaths on the site should take account of the requirements of disabled people.

Hard Standings

5. Every caravan should stand on a hard standing of suitable material, such as concrete, which should extend over the whole area occupied by the caravan placed upon it and should project a sufficient distance outwards from the entrance or entrances of the caravan to enable occupants to enter and leave safely.

Fire Fighting Appliances

Fire Points

6. Fire points should be established so that no caravan or site building is more than 30 metres from a fire point. They should be housed in a weatherproof structure easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked 'FIRE POINT'.

Fire Fighting Equipment

7. Where water standpipes are provided and there is a water supply of sufficient pressure and flow to project a jet of water approximately 5 metres from the nozzle, such water standpipes should be situated at each fire point and should be fitted with a double check valve to prevent backflow. There should also be a reel that complies with British Standard 5306 Part 1, with a hose not less than 30 metres long, having a means of connection to a water standpipe (preferably a screw thread connection) with a water supply of sufficient pressure and terminating in a small hand control nozzle. Hoses should be housed in a box painted red and marked 'HOSE REEL'.

8. Where standpipes are not provided but there is a water supply of sufficient pressure and flow, fire hydrants should be installed within 100 metres of every caravan standing. Hydrants fitted with Belfast V Thread Female Type Outlets should conform to British Standard 750 and be clearly highlighted using a luminous type yellow paint. Access to fire hydrants and other water supplies should not be obstructed or obscured.

9. Where standpipes are not provided or the water pressure or flow is not sufficient, each fire point should be provided with either water extinguishers (2 x 9 litres) or a water tank of at least 500 litres capacity fitted with a hinged cover, 2 buckets and 1 hand pump or bucket pump.

10. On some sites it might be appropriate to have available other means of extinguishing fires such as carbon dioxide extinguishers, dry powder extinguishers or sand. The advice of the NI Fire Brigade should be sought.

Fire Warning

11. A means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire should be provided at each fire point. This could be a battery or mains powered fire alarm and sounder or by means of a manually operated sounder, e.g. a metal triangle with a striker, a gong or a hand-operated siren. The advice of the NI Fire Brigade should be sought on an appropriate system.

It is recommended that smoke alarms should be installed within each caravan.

Maintenance

12. All alarm and fire fighting equipment should be installed, tested and maintained in working order by a competent person and be available for inspection by, or on behalf of the district council. A log book should be kept to record all tests and any remedial action.

13. All equipment susceptible to damage by frost should be suitably protected.

Fire Notices

14. A clearly written and conspicuous notice should be provided and maintained at each fire point to indicate the action to be taken in case of fire and the location of the nearest telephone. This notice should include the following:

‘On discovering a fire

- (i) ensure the caravan or site building involved is evacuated;
- (ii) raise the alarm;
- (iii) call the fire brigade (the nearest telephone is sited);
- (iv) attack the fire using the fire fighting equipment provided, only if safe to do so.

It is in the interest of all occupiers of this site to be familiar with the above routine and the method of operating the fire alarm and fire fighting equipment.’

Fire Hazards

15. Grass and vegetation should be cut at frequent and regular intervals to prevent it becoming a fire hazard to caravans, buildings or other installations on the site. Any such cuttings should be removed from the vicinity of caravans. The space beneath and between caravans should not be used for the storage of combustible materials.

Telephones

16. An immediately accessible telephone should be available on the site for calling the emergency services. A notice by the telephone should include the address of the site.

Storage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

17. LPG supplied from tanks should comply with Guidance Booklet HSG 34, 'The Storage of LPG at Fixed Installations' or, if LPG is supplied from cylinders, with Guidance Note CS4, 'The Keeping of LPG in Cylinders and Similar Containers' and Guidance Note CS8, 'Small Scale Storage and Display of LPG at Retail Premises'.

If there are metered supplies from a common LPG storage tank, then Guidance Note CS11, 'The Storage and Use of LPG at Metered Estates' provides further guidance.

Exposed gas bottles or cylinders should not be within the separation boundary of an adjoining unit.

LPG installations should conform to British Standard 5482, 'Code of Practice for domestic butane and propane gas-burning installations, Part 2: 1977: Installations in caravans and non-permanent dwellings'. Attention should be drawn to the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association (LPGA) Code of Practice No. 21 'Guidelines for caravan ventilation and flueing checks'. Installation and maintenance work associated with LPG should be carried out by a competent person.

Electrical Installations

18. Sites should be provided with an electricity supply sufficient in all respects to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans situated on them.

An approved electrical outlet should be provided at each standing. All common buildings must have adequate internal lighting. In addition, it must be possible for residents to see their way about the site adequately at night and in particular to find their way easily to the common buildings. There should be enough external lighting to achieve this. Private access carriageways and roadways should also be provided with adequate street lighting.

19. Any electrical installations, systems, equipment and conductors which are not NIE works and circuits should be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers' (IEE) Regulations for Electrical Installations for the time being in force.

20. Work on electrical installations and appliances should be carried out only by competent persons such as the manufacturer's appointed agent, the electricity supplier, a professionally qualified electrical engineer, a contractor approved by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting, or a qualified person acting on behalf of one of the above. Any major alterations and extensions to an installation and all parts of the existing installation affected by them should comply with the latest version of the IEE Wiring Regulations.

21. The installations should be inspected periodically: under IEE Wiring Regulations, every year or such longer period (not exceeding 3 years) as is considered appropriate in each case. If an inspection reveals that an installation no longer complies with the regulations extant at the time it was first installed, any deficiencies should be rectified.

The inspector should, within one month of such an inspection, issue an inspection certificate in the form prescribed in the IEE Wiring Regulations which should be retained by the site operator and displayed, supplemented or replaced by subsequent certificates, with the site licence. The cost of the inspection and report should be met by the site operator or licence holder.

22. If there are overhead electric lines on the site, suitable warning notices should be displayed at the entrance to the site and on supports for the line. Where appropriate, particular attention should be drawn to the danger of masts of yachts or dinghies contacting the line.

Water Supply

23. All sites should be provided with a water supply which is wholesome for domestic purposes and sufficient for domestic, central heating and sanitary purposes. Wholesomeness standards shall be those defined in any regulations made under Article 3C of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 1973.

Drainage, Sanitation and Washing Facilities

24. Satisfactory provision should be made for foul drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or sewage treatment works or by discharge to a properly constructed septic tank approved by the Department of the Environment or cesspool approved by the district council.

25. Each caravan should have its own water supply and water closet. Each caravan standing should be provided with a connection to the foul drainage system; the connection should be capable of being made airtight when not in use.

26. Every site and every hard standing should be provided with an adequate underground drainage system for the complete and hygienic disposal of foul water from the site, buildings, caravans, roads and footpaths. The foul and rain water drainage from new buildings is controlled under Building Regulations.

Disabled Persons

27. Particular consideration should be given to the needs of disabled people in the provision made for water points.

Provision for access for disabled people to common buildings should be in compliance with Building Regulations extant at the time the building was erected, altered or extended. Particular consideration should be given as to how any new standards may be introduced where appropriate.

Refuse Disposal

28. Every caravan standing should have an adequate number of suitable non-combustible refuse bins with close-fitting lids, plastic wheeled bins or plastic bags. Arrangements should be made for the bins to be emptied regularly. Where communal refuse bins are also provided these should be of similar construction and housed within a properly constructed bin store which should be provided with a facility to enable it to be hosed down with clean water.

Parking

29. One car only may be parked between adjoining caravans provided that the door of the caravan is not obstructed. Suitably surfaced parking spaces should be provided where necessary to meet the additional requirements of the occupants and their visitors. Plastic or wooden boats should not be parked between units.

Recreation Space

30. Where children live on the site, space equivalent to about one-tenth of the total usable area should be allocated for children's games and/or other recreational purposes. This provision will normally be necessary because of the limited space available around the caravans, but may be omitted where there are suitable alternative publicly provided recreational facilities which are readily accessible.

Notices

31. A suitable sign should be prominently displayed at the site entrance indicating the name of the site and the name and telephone number of the site operator or licence holder.

32. A copy of the site licence with its conditions should be displayed prominently on the site.

33. Notices and a site plan should be displayed on the site setting out the action to be taken in the event of an emergency. They should show where the police, fire brigade, ambulance, and local doctors can be contacted and the location of the nearest public telephone. The notices should also give the name, location and telephone number of the site operator or licence holder. At sites subject to flood risk, warning notices should be displayed giving advice about the operation of the flood warning system.

34. All notices should be suitably protected from the weather and displayed where possible out of the direct rays of the sun, preferably in areas lit by artificial lighting.

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September 1994



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