

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005

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HOUSE DRH30151-LR-50 (02/22)

Short Title: Migrant Worker Housing Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Alexander.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ENHANCE LAWS RELATED TO THE MIGRANT HOUSING ACT OF
NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 95-223 reads as rewritten:

"§ 95-223. Definitions.

As used in this Article, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (1) "Agricultural employment" means employment in any service or activity included within the provisions of Section 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, or section 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and the handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, or grading prior to delivery for storage of any agricultural or horticultural commodity in its unmanufactured state and including the harvesting of Christmas trees, the planting of trees, and the harvesting of saltwater ~~erabs;~~crabs.
- (2) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Labor of North ~~Carolina;~~Carolina.
- (3) "Day" means a calendar ~~day;~~day.
- (4) "Established federal standard" means those standards as set out in, and interpretations issued by, the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor in 29 C.F.R. 1910.142, as ~~amended;~~amended.
- (5) "Migrant" means an individual, and his dependents, who is employed in agricultural employment ~~of a seasonal or other temporary nature, and who is required to be absent overnight from his permanent place of residence;~~ where housing is provided as an incident of employment.

- 1 (6) "Migrant housing" or "migrant housing unit" means any facility,
2 structure, real property, or other unit that is established, operated, or
3 used as living quarters for ~~migrants;~~migrants.
- 4 (7) "Operator" means any person who owns or controls migrant ~~housing;~~
5 ~~and~~housing and any person who contracts with or employs an operator
6 to provide him or her with migrants for the purpose of performing
7 agricultural employment.
- 8 (8) "Person" means an individual, partnership, association, joint stock
9 company, corporation, trust, or legal ~~representative;~~representative.
- 10 (8a) "Reasonable cost" does not include a profit to the operator and may
11 not exceed actual cost or fair market value, whichever is less.
- 12 (8b) "Retaliatory action" means the discharge, suspension, demotion,
13 retaliatory relocation of a migrant, eviction or summary ejection, or
14 other adverse action taken against a migrant or the migrant's dependent
15 in the terms, conditions, privileges, and benefits of tenancy or
16 employment.
- 17 (9) "Substantive violation" means a violation of a safety and health
18 standard, including those that provide fire prevention, and adequate
19 and sanitary supply of water, plumbing maintenance, structurally
20 sound construction of buildings, effective maintenance of those
21 buildings, provision of adequate heat as weather conditions require,
22 and reasonable protection for inhabitants from insects and rodents. A
23 substantive violation does not include technical or procedural
24 violations of safety and health standards."

25 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 95-224 reads as rewritten:

26 **"§ 95-224. Scope.**

27 The provisions of this Article shall apply to all operators and migrants except:

- 28 (1) Any ~~person-operator who owns housing and~~ who, in the ordinary
29 course of that person's business, regularly provides housing on a
30 commercial basis to the general public; and who provides housing to
31 migrants of the same character and on the same or comparable terms
32 and conditions as those provided to the general ~~public;~~public,
33 provided that more than fifty percent (50%) of the tenants are not
34 migrants or their dependents; or
- 35 (2) A housing unit owned by one or more of the occupants and occupied
36 solely by a family unit."

37 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 95-225 reads as rewritten:

38 **"§ 95-225. Adoption of standards and interpretations.**

39 (a) Unless otherwise provided, all established federal standards are adopted and
40 shall be enforced by the Department of Labor of North Carolina.

41 (b) The Commissioner shall provide for publication in the North Carolina
42 Register any modification by the federal government of the established federal
43 standards within 30 days of their adoption.

1 (c) For the protection of the public health, the Commission for Health Services
2 shall adopt and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall enforce
3 rules that establish water quality and water sanitation standards for migrant housing
4 under this Article.

5 (d) The requirements for the collection, treatment, and disposal of sewage, as
6 provided in Article 11 of Chapter 130A, and the rules adopted pursuant to that Article
7 shall apply to migrant housing.

8 (d1) Charges for migrant housing shall not exceed reasonable cost. The employer
9 has the burden of providing reasonable cost through records or other credible evidence.

10 (e) Whenever the outside temperature falls below 50 degrees Fahrenheit and the
11 migrant housing is occupied, heating equipment shall be provided by the operator and
12 ~~operable.~~ operable by the migrant. Regardless of outside temperature, this equipment
13 must be capable of maintaining living areas of 65 degrees Fahrenheit. If housing is to be
14 occupied from May 15 until September 1 only, no heating equipment shall be required
15 at the time of preoccupancy inspection. No migrant shall be charged for heat or fuel for
16 heat.

17 (f) All migrant housing shall comply with the standards regarding fire safety for
18 migrant housing as adopted by the Commission for Health Services and in effect on
19 January 1, 1989.

20 (g) For purposes of this Article, the established federal standard provided in 29
21 C.F.R. 1910.142(i) does not apply. The following standards shall apply to migrant
22 housing:

23 (1) Food preparation facilities and eating areas shall be provided and
24 maintained in a clean and sanitary ~~manner;~~ manner.

25 (2) A kitchen facility shall be provided with an operable stove with at least
26 one burner per ~~five-three~~ three people, and in no event with less than two
27 burners; an operable refrigerator with ~~.75-two~~ two cubic feet per person
28 minimum; a ~~table;~~ table and chairs or benches providing sufficient
29 seating and table space to accommodate the number of migrants for
30 which the housing is permitted, and a sink with running hot and cold
31 ~~water;~~ water.

32 (3) Surfaces with which food or drink come in contact shall be easily
33 accessible for cleaning, and shall be nontoxic, resistant to corrosion,
34 nonabsorbent, and free of open ~~erevices;~~ crevices.

35 (4) Acceptable storage facilities shall be provided and shall be kept clean
36 and free of ~~vermin;~~ and vermin.

37 (5) All food service facilities, other than those where migrants procure and
38 prepare food for their own or their family's consumption, shall comply
39 with the standards regarding kitchen and dining room facilities for
40 migrant housing, as adopted by the Commission for Health Services
41 and in effect on January 1, 1989.

42 (6) Migrants shall have access to all food preparation facilities and eating
43 areas at all times during their occupancy of the migrant housing.

1 (h) Each migrant housing unit shall have at least one working telephone that is
2 accessible at all times if there is no working public telephone within a distance of one
3 mile from the unit.

4 (i) Each toilet, water closet, chemical toilet, and urinal shall be separated by a
5 wall on three sides at least six feet in height and by a door which can be locked from the
6 inside.

7 (j) For purposes of this Article, the established federal standards provided in 29
8 C.F.R. § 1910.142(d)(5-6) do not apply. The following standards shall apply to migrant
9 housing:

10 (1) Where toilet facilities are shared, the number of water closets provided
11 for each sex shall be based on the maximum number of persons of that
12 sex which the camp is designed to house at any one time, in the ratio
13 of one such unit to each 10 persons, with a minimum of two units for
14 any shared facility.

15 (2) Urinals shall be provided on the basis of one unit or two linear feet of
16 urinal trough for every 15 men. The floor from the wall and for a
17 distance not less than 15 inches measured from the outward edge of
18 the urinals shall be constructed of materials impervious to moisture.
19 Where water under pressure is available, urinals shall be provided with
20 an adequate water flush.

21 (3) Privies are not permitted.

22 (k) Each migrant housing unit in which three or more migrants live shall have a
23 working washing machine and dryer, and at least one working washing machine and
24 dryer shall be provided for every 10 migrants.

25 (l) All doors opening to the exterior shall have functioning deadbolt locks, and
26 each migrant shall be provided a key to any door that opens into a common area and to
27 any door that opens into his or her sleeping quarters.

28 (m) All exterior windows shall have functioning locks.

29 (n) A migrant is entitled to receive visitors to the migrant housing provided for
30 lawful purposes. Nothing contained in this subsection shall prohibit an owner from
31 banning or barring any visitors who are engaged in criminal activity.

32 (o) Operators shall keep all common areas in safe and sanitary condition.

33 (p) For purposes of this Article, the established federal standard provided in 29
34 C.F.R. § 1910.142(b)(9) does not apply. The following standards shall apply to migrant
35 housing:

36 (1) Sleeping quarters shall be provided which are separate from cooking
37 facilities.

38 (q) Each migrant shall be provided with a mattress that is clean and in good
39 repair, as follows:

40 (1) Mattresses shall comply with Commission for Health Services rules on
41 sanitation, Title 15A Chapter 18B .0202-.0215 and G.S. 130A-273.

42 (2) Mattresses shall not be less than four inches thick and shall be the
43 same length and width as the bunks.

1 (3) Mattresses shall not have any metal, plastic, or other rigid framing
2 component.

3 (4) Mattress ticking shall be durable and water-repellent.

4 (5) Mattresses shall be of fire-resistant and nontoxic construction.

5 (r) One shower head within a separate shower stall shall be provided for every
6 five migrants."

7 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 95-226 reads as rewritten:

8 **"§ 95-226. Application for inspection.**

9 (a) Every operator shall request a preoccupancy inspection at least 45 days prior
10 to the anticipated date of occupancy by applying directly to the Department of Labor of
11 North Carolina or to the local health department. Upon receipt of an application by the
12 Department of Labor of North Carolina, the Department of Labor of North Carolina
13 shall immediately notify, in writing, the appropriate local health department; and the
14 local health department shall inspect the migrant housing for compliance with
15 G.S. 95-225(c) and (d). Upon receipt of the application by the local health department,
16 the local health department shall immediately notify, in writing, the Department of
17 Labor of North Carolina and shall inspect the migrant housing for compliance with
18 G.S. 95-225(c) and (d).

19 The local health department shall forward the results of its inspection to the
20 Department of Labor of North Carolina and to the operator. The Department of Labor of
21 North Carolina shall inspect the migrant housing and certify to the operator the results
22 of the inspection.

23 (b) The Department of Labor of North Carolina shall provide local health
24 departments and Agricultural Extension offices with blank copies of forms for applying
25 for preoccupancy inspections.

26 (c) The application for inspection shall include:

27 (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the operator;

28 (2) The location of the migrant housing;

29 (3) The anticipated number of migrants to be housed in the migrant
30 housing; and

31 (4) The anticipated dates of occupancy of the migrant housing.

32 (d) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, an operator may allow
33 the migrant housing to be occupied only if the migrant housing has been certified by the
34 Department of Labor of North Carolina or the United States Department of Labor to be
35 in compliance with all of the standards under this Article, except that an operator may
36 allow migrant housing to be occupied on a provisional basis if the operator applied for a
37 preoccupancy inspection at least 45 days prior to occupancy and the preoccupancy
38 inspection was not conducted by the Department of Labor of North Carolina at least
39 four days prior to the anticipated occupancy. Upon subsequent inspection by the
40 Department of Labor of North Carolina, such provisional occupancy shall be revoked if
41 any deficiencies have not been corrected within the period of time specified by the
42 Department of Labor of North Carolina, or within two days after receipt of written
43 notice provided on-site to the operator. No penalties may be assessed for any violation

1 of this Article which are found during the first preoccupancy inspection, inspection of a
2 migrant housing unit unless substantive violations exist during provisional occupancy.

3 (e) If an operator has applied for an inspection pursuant to this Article and one or
4 more migrants arrives in advance of the arrival date stated in the application, the
5 operator shall notify the Department of Labor of North Carolina within two working
6 days of the occupancy of the migrant housing.

7 (f) The Department of Labor of North Carolina shall conduct annual
8 postoccupancy inspections of operators who have been issued a fine in any of the
9 previous three calendar years or who have more than one complaint filed against him or
10 her in the previous three calendar years."

11 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 95-227 reads as rewritten:

12 "**§ 95-227. Enforcement.**

13 (a) For the purpose of enforcing the standards provided by this Article, the
14 provisions of G.S. 95-129, G.S. 95-130 and G.S. 95-136 through G.S. 95-142 shall
15 apply under this Article in a similar manner as they apply to places of employment
16 under OSHANC; however, ~~G.S. 95-129(4), 95-130(2), and 95-130(6) do not apply to~~
17 ~~migrant housing.~~ the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina. For the
18 purposes of this Article, the term:

19 (1) "Employer" in G.S. 95-129, G.S. 95-130 and G.S. 95-136 through
20 G.S. 95-142 shall be construed to mean an ~~operator;~~ operator or the
21 person or entity contracting with an operator for the operator to
22 provide him or her with migrants for the purpose of performing
23 agricultural employment.

24 (2) "Employee" shall be construed to mean a ~~migrant; and migrant.~~

25 (3) "Director" shall mean the agent designated by the Commissioner to
26 assist in the administration of this Article.

27 The Commissioner may establish a new division to enforce this Article.

28 (b) The Department of Labor of North Carolina shall maintain a list of operators
29 and the physical address of their migrant housing units, number and summary of
30 complaints filed annually with the division that enforces this Article, and number and
31 summary of inspections performed annually by the division that enforces this Article,
32 including the number and type of citations issued and the violations found. The list shall
33 be made available to the public upon written request within 15 days.

34 (c) If the condition of the housing is such that the Director determines that the
35 housing is uninhabitable, the migrants shall be allowed to remain in the housing for a
36 reasonable period, not to exceed 14 days, while the operator locates alternative housing
37 or makes such repairs as render the housing inhabitable. The alternative housing must
38 be provided at the same rate or less than the rate paid by the migrants for the
39 uninhabitable housing.

40 (d) The Department of Labor of North Carolina shall establish and implement
41 procedures to identify and prosecute the most serious violators of this Article, including
42 failure to apply for or obtain permits to operate migrant housing pursuant to the Article.

43 (e) The Department of Labor of North Carolina shall maximize the efforts of
44 personnel implementing this Article by seeking to use new resources and nontraditional

1 means, by coordinating with State, local, and federal agencies, and by training and
2 coordinating with local health and building departments.

3 (f) All of the requirements of this Article shall be performed by employees of the
4 Department of Labor of North Carolina who, to the extent feasible, shall be bilingual in
5 Spanish and English.

6 (g) An operator shall not take retaliatory action against a migrant because of a
7 good faith attempt to exercise, secure, or enforce any rights or protections existing
8 under this Article or any other State or federal law.

9 (h) Any right or obligation declared by this Article is enforceable by civil action,
10 in addition to other remedies in law and in equity."

11 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2006.