

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAVY EDUCATIONAL HOUSING FORUMS ADDRESS RESIDENTS CONCERNS

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Approximately 40 families attended the first in a series of housing forums that took place outside Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek - Fort Story in the Little Creek Community Center, Dec. 14. Lincoln Military Housing (LMH) and the Navy held the forum in response to concerns by residents about their Lincoln homes.

Rear Adm. Tim Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, is hosting the housing forums to ensure all residents have the opportunity to learn about what military resources are available and how to locate appropriate rental housing and resolve landlord/tenant problems. Leadership from LMH and the Navy attended along with representatives from Fleet and Family Readiness and Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC).

NMCPHC is the Navy and Marine Corps center for public health services. They provide leadership and expertise to ensure mission readiness through disease prevention and health promotion to support the National Military Strategy.

“A lot of misinformation was set to rest,” said Capt. Don Hagen, Certified Industrial Hygienist, NMCPHC. “There were quite a few people there and they did have mild concerns that I think were addressed. Not all went away happy but issues were resolved with both Lincoln and the housing office.”

“We talked to many families who had health concerns about mold and as the Navy CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), we tried to address those concerns by sharing what we know based on experience and expertise on mold,” said Dr. Paul Gillooly, NMCPHC representative. “I think that last night we were effective at addressing the concerns – I felt like we helped some people.”

Addressing the residents’ concerns was the main reason for the forum, but assuring them that the Navy understands and takes responsibility for its Sailors and families was paramount. Alexander looked at all sides of the issue and found that there is improvement needed in all areas.

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“We need to do a better job across the board. It’s more than just our family housing folks that are making the referrals and serving as mediators and advocates,” said Alexander. “The Naval Facilities Engineering Command has oversight of the lease and the operating doctrines. We are taking a full scrub of everything to ensure we are doing everything we are supposed to do.”

Last week, the Navy began meeting individually with military families who have reported unresolved issues in their LMH homes. During those meetings, the families had the opportunity to express their specific concerns with Navy officials. In addition, citing concerns from several residents that leaking windows may be responsible for mold/mildew issues, the Navy is currently ordering independent inspections of several homes; however, they need the help of the residents.

“The health and safety of our military personnel and their families is always our highest priority,” said Alexander. “Since we were first informed of this issue, we have been engaged with Lincoln Military Housing and continue to assist them in addressing these concerns. Navy staff, including engineers and technicians, along with Lincoln Military Housing staff, have visited with residents to assess their Lincoln managed homes. The Navy will continue to work with Lincoln to insure that these issues are appropriately resolved.”

Some of the housing properties were built into LMH’s contract when they took over the Navy-owned and managed housing in 2005. So far, 10 special Lincoln maintenance teams, in conjunction with Navy personnel, have inspected 589 homes. The purpose of the teams is to conduct interior safety and water intrusion inspections.

“We certainly have some older homes in the inventory and we need to address the issues that are in those homes. I am confident that we will get Lincoln to do that,” said Alexander, stating that the Navy’s goal was to make these houses on par with the newer models. “We need to have Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsman living in the type of homes they deserve.”

The Navy is looking to make this a change in their procedures, not just a quick fix to the situation.

“It is my goal to ensure we don’t have to go through this one year, two years, five years from now,” he said. “My pledge to every family that lives in our housing is, ‘I am the guy to make things right.’”

The next forum will be held tonight from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Norwich Manor Community Center, 7853 Norfolk Crossing in Norfolk, and a forum for residents of military housing in Yorktown is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 19 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Lincoln Community Center at Yorktown.

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“My staff and I cannot do this alone – we need your help. If you live in one of our LMH homes and have concerns, your first touch point is with your Lincoln community management team. If they do not resolve your issue to your satisfaction, I want to hear from you,” said Alexander.

Staff from Navy Region Mid-Atlantic provided concerned family members with a letter from Alexander stating his support for them and provided them with a comprehensive list of contact numbers for any issues they have or may incur in the future.

For any housing issues in Norfolk or Virginia Beach, contact the Navy Housing Service Center by calling (757) 445-2832 or (800) 628-7510. For housing issues on the peninsula contact the Navy Housing Service Center by calling (757) 847-7806 or (800) 704-5488. Counselors are available to advocate your issues with the community management team until your issue is resolved.

Navy Region Mid-Atlantic is responsible for the operation of Navy installations from North Carolina to Maine, and provides support programs and services for the Fleet, Fighter and Family.

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For addition information about the Housing Forums please call the Navy's Mid-Atlantic Region Public Affairs Office at (757)322-2853.

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