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**Guidelines for a Commissioned Pastor Contract**

A commissioned pastor is an elder who is trained, commissioned, and supervised by a classis for a specific ministry within that classis and under the auspices of a local church or congregation.

Guidelines for the approval of contracts (*BCO,* Chapter 1, Part II, Article 17):

1. **All** contracts (full-time or part-time) with commissioned pastors must be written and approved by the consistory of the local church and by the GLCC before they can be in effect.
   1. Contracts should be submitted to the classis clerk who will meet with the Calls and Contract Approval Team (CCAT) to consider their approval, amendment, or disapproval. A church or congregation shall not enter into a contract with a commissioned pastor except by the approval of the classis.
   2. The Classis Executive Team will consider any complaints regarding the decisions of the CCAT and refer them to the classis for consideration, if necessary.
2. The commissioned pastor shall be authorized to preach the Word and celebrate the sacraments. In addition, the consistory or governing body must specify in writing the functions that are being authorized as part of a contract.
3. Contracts do not have to comply with the minimum salary guidelines for ministers, but must be fair and equitable as determined by the classis CCAT.
   1. The CCAT recommends the use of the voluntary Church Staff Salary Guidelines that are approved by the regional synod each year as a place to start a conversation about compensation.
   2. A housing allowance benefit may be available for commissioned pastors, depending on the duties of the CP and the applicable guidelines issued by the IRS.
4. The consistory or governing body shall regularly review the performance of any commissioned pastor working under contract with the church.

1. All contracts must specify the guidelines for the dissolution of the relationship between the church and the person working under contract. If a contract is not renewed, the Classis Clerk must be informed.
2. Renewal of a contract should be initiated no less than 60 days before the contract expires.
3. **All** contracts should be reviewed by the Classis whenever a change in the contract occurs (e.g. salary changes, benefits change, workload, or work hours change, contract expires, etc.). When salary and benefits are increased during a multi-year contract, answering the Constitutional Inquiry questions (*BCO*, 1.II.7) will be considered a sufficient review.