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|      INFORMATIONAL LETTER        |        TRANSMITTAL:  95 INF-31
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                                          DIVISION:  Economic
 TO:            Commissioners of                     Security
                Social Services

                                          DATE:  August 25, 1995

   SUBJECT:     Frequent Reapplications for Emergency Home Relief




   SUGGESTED
   DISTRIBUTION:   Income Maintenance Directors
                   Staff Development Coordinators




  CONTACT PERSON:   Call 1-800-343-8859
                    Income Support, Maureen Standish, extension 3-6555


  ATTACHMENTS:    None
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<div align="center">FILING REFERENCES</div>

| Previous ADMs/INFs | Releases Cancelled | Dept. Regs. | Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref. | Manual Ref. | Misc. Ref. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 370.3 | | | |

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   DSS-329EL (Rev. 9/89)
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The  purpose of this letter is to clarify Department policy in the emergency
Home Relief program.   Department regulation 370.3(a) defines  an  emergency
Home  Relief  or  short-term  case  as  "a case in which need is presumed to
continue for a period of less than three months; provided,  however,   that
cases  in  which  frequent  reapplications  for  assistance are made are not
considered emergency or short-term."  This last phrase has not been  clearly
defined or understood.

The intent of this phrase in the regulation is to prevent  situations  where
individuals    apply   for   emergency   assistance,   not  because  they have
experienced a short-term,  temporary emergency situation, (i.e.,  such as a
fire  or  a  medical  emergency)  but rather because they are unable to meet
their normal everyday living expenses.   They may be unable  to  meet  these
expenses  because  they are living beyond their means or because they should
be applying for ongoing public assistance or  other  benefits (i.e.,   SSI,
Unemployment  Insurance  Benefits,  Social Security Benefits,  etc.) to meet
their recurring needs.   As some local districts have observed,  individuals
may  also  make frequent reapplications for emergency assistance in order to
circumvent the normal eligibility requirements,  such as  work  rules,   for
ongoing public assistance.

An example  of  a  situation  where  a  person  is  applying  for  emergency
assistance  to meet normal living expenses is a person who comes in to apply
for shelter arrears every few months.   After investigating,  the  agency
learns  that  the  person  pays some of the rent,  but never pays it in full
because income is being used to meet a car payment, car insurance and credit
card  debts.   An example of a person who should be applying for additional
benefits is a person who has a small social security survivors  pension  and
is  coming  in  at  the  end  of  every  month  to  apply for emergency food
vouchers.  After investigating,  the agency determines that the person would
be financially eligible for on-going Home Relief.

When  individuals make frequent reapplications for emergency assistance (for
example,  more than once within a three month period or a pattern  of  every
few  months),   local  districts should carefully review the reasons for the
multiple applications to determine  whether  one  of  the  above  situations
exists.   If so,  eligibility for assistance should be determined based upon
the eligibility requirements for recurring  public  assistance.   In  other
words, local districts should deny emergency assistance whenever, based upon
the case circumstances,  the district determines  that  an  application  for
recurring  assistance is more appropriate.   In such cases,  the application
should be treated as an application for recurring assistance. The applicant
does  not  have  to complete another application,  but the applicant must be
provided with a notice of the denial of emergency assistance,  as well as  a
notification  of  the  action  taken  on  the  application for  recurring
assistance.   Some of these applicants  will  not  be  eligible  for  either
emergency assistance or recurring assistance.

    NOTE:  Because State Law requires  payment  of  utility  arrears  for
    eligible households,  households applying for utility arrears assistance
    are exempt from this provision.

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It should be noted that employable persons who receive emergency Home Relief
can be required to work off their emergency benefit through workfare.


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                              Patricia A. Stevens
                              Deputy Commissioner
                              Division of Economic Security