

# 28 families can remain in FEMA trailers until they find housing

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Although the official deadline for vacating FEMA trailers housing earthquake-displaced families is in three days, FEMA representatives said none of the 28 families living in the trailers will be evicted.

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials have agreed to extend the deadline to give the families more time to find permanent housing.

About a month after the October 1989 earthquake, FEMA installed 120 trailers in four lots in Watsonville to provide rent-free shelter for 18 months to people displaced by the earthquake. On Thursday that agreement will officially end.

But FEMA officials have been meeting with trailer-park residents, Watsonville city officials and Santa Cruz County housing representatives for several months and have agreed to allow the remaining residents to stay in the trailers

after the deadline passes.

FEMA officials have been assuring residents they will not "be put out on the street" after April 18. FEMA said it estimates residents can be placed in permanent housing within the next two months.

In November, Watsonville city officials arranged an emergency meeting with FEMA officials and trailer-park residents after a confrontation developed between residents at the Crestview Avenue trailer park and three state Department of Parks and Recreation workers.

The park department workers were told by FEMA officials they could take a pile of cinder blocks that had been used to shore up the trailers. But residents were not told about the arrangement and thought the workers were preparing some of the trailers to be moved away.

Residents surrounded the park department dump truck and did

not allow it to leave until workers agreed not to take the cinder blocks.

A couple of days later, city officials arranged the meeting with FEMA and trailer-park residents. FEMA said later it had not properly informed the residents about the park department workers coming to the trailer park and agreed that none of the trailers would be moved away without giving residents proper notice.

FEMA officials also agreed not to evict any remaining trailer-park residents after the April 18 deadline.

Since then, FEMA has removed many of the empty trailers and taken them to its Texas headquarters, where the coaches are refurbished. Only a few trailers remain at the parks. Some of the residents say finding affordable housing is still difficult, particularly if they have large families.