

Safe Sleep Policy Overview

When it comes to homelessness, Mayor Hales believes there to be only one goal: **to provide affordable housing for every person in Portland.**

However, today we are faced with the reality of having more people sleeping outside in Portland than there are indoor bed spaces available for them, and despite the urgency of the work that's happening every day, that reality will last for some time to come.

If this work is viewed as a continuum, then it is bookended by the **short term fixes of today**—the reality of roughly 2,000 people currently sleeping outside in Portland—and the **long-term solution of permanent, affordable housing for everybody.** The work being done by the City, County and our other partners at A Home For Everyone to move towards the Mayor's goal is happening as quickly as possible. In the last 4 months of the State of Emergency on Housing and Homelessness, unprecedented dollars have been strategically placed to move people out of homelessness every day; 695 homeless veterans were housed last year thanks to a partnership with the White House; over 400 temporary shelter beds for women, men, and families have been opened; and more and more affordable housing units are being built and planned.

The system that's been in place for decades has been based solely on the idea that moving people around the city and not letting them create permanency will reduce criminal behavior from occurring. But, most of our homeless population are simply looking for a **safe night's sleep** and have suffered needless trauma that comes with uncertainty about where that safe night's sleep can be, and whether they will lose their possessions. Also under past guidelines, there has been no ability for police to know who was looking for a place to sleep and who was committing crime—so everybody was subject to “sweeps” in a blanket manner.

As Mayor Hales has so often stated, “until we can finish the sentence ‘*you can't stay here, but...*’” we should be more strategic about when we need to move people around the city. That strategy led the Mayor to build a new system designed to balance the need of our homeless residents to have a safe place to sleep with the health, safety and livability of the city that we all—housed and houseless—must have.

Phase one of the new system began last fall when the Mayor announced several new initiatives:

- **Day Storage Pilot Program** was implemented to provide homeless Portlanders an opportunity to store their belongings during the day so they can do all the things most of us take for granted—going to the doctor, a job interview, or any other service. The storage containers come with two toilets, sharps disposal containers and trash dumpsters. Data is being collected on the pilot program, if successful, more containers will likely be placed throughout the city.
- **High Intensity Street Engagement Program** was launched in order to offer those with the highest barriers to service and housing more specialized behavioral health service and housing.

- **One-Point-of-Contact Complaint System** was designed, allowing for an easier mechanism for the public to register camping complaints. This system also allows the City to collect and map data in order to prioritize and more strategically track complaints and responses, including trash pickup, service and enforcement. (Website: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/campsites>, Email: reportpdx@portlandoregon.gov, Phone: 503-823-4000)
- **Homelessness Toolkit** was designed to provide resources and information during a State of Emergency in Housing & Homelessness (Website is still under development and will be fully available soon)

Phase two of the new system was recently launched updating Portland’s **Safe Sleep Policy**—the creation of new options for where and how people can safely sleep outdoors. These options come with clear guidelines and expectations and are aimed at eliminating large, sprawling, unregulated camps and creating more opportunity for safe, lower-impact sleeping.

Should a person refuse to choose any option, that allows the City an opportunity to assess whether that person needs (1) more intensive service, or whether (2) enforcement is an appropriate tool.

These new Portland Safe Sleep options are detailed below.

PORTLAND SAFE SLEEP OPTIONS

- **New Safe Sleep General Guidelines**
 - Only sleeping bags and/or tarps on sidewalks (no tents/structures)
 - Tents, from 9:00pm – 7:00am, on rights of way (other than sidewalks) and remnants
 - No groups bigger than six people in any one location
 - Other guidelines as written below
- **Organized, City Sanctioned Camping**
 - Permitted by City
 - Hosted by a City-selected “camp host”
 - Code of Conduct
 - Restrooms and sanitation provided
- **Organized, City Sanctioned Car/RV Camping**
 - Permitted by City
 - Hosted by a City-selected “camp host”
 - Code of Conduct
 - Restrooms and sanitation provided
 - Church parking lots ok when in partnership with City
- **Shelter**

General Guidelines for Safe Sleep on City of Portland property (not including City-sanctioned organized camping):

- The property is outdoors and open to the public;

- Generally allowed to have 6 or fewer people sleeping at one location;
- Sleep areas must create little or no visible garbage or trash
- Sidewalks
 - Only sleeping bag and/or tarps are allowed on the sidewalk for sleeping;
 - Pedestrian, wheel chair, and other forms of conveyance must have clear passage on sidewalks paths, and trails at all times;
 - Current rules governing high pedestrian use zones remain in effect;
- Rights of way/Remnant land
 - Temporary structures are allowed, but not on sidewalks;
 - Temporary structures, where allowed, can only be used from 9:00 pm – 7:00 am and then must be dismantled;
 - Not allowed more than one temporary structure per person;

Activity/Conditions **NOT** allowed, which could result in immediate enforcement:

- Pedestrian, wheel chair, and other forms of conveyance are blocked due to structure(s)/items of camping.
- Structure/items of camping is located on a public street, including parking spaces.
- Structure/items of camping is located on a sidewalk.
- Structure/items of camping is blocking access in/out of parked vehicle.
- Structure/items of camping is blocking access to bicycle rack.

Activity/Conditions **NOT** allowed, which could trigger the authorization for a permanent campsite removal:

- Criminal activity threatening to other campers or community members (i.e. chop shops, assaultive behavior, open air drug-use/sales, etc.)
 - If the criminal activity can be stopped by removing an individual from the camp, and the rest of the camp occupants are cooperating with police to help stop the criminal activity, then the camp may not need to be permanently removed
- Camp or structure (temporary or permanent) that is located on the sidewalk
- Camp or structure (temporary or permanent) that is located on a public street, including within parking spaces
- Semi-permanent structures (Unless part of a City-sanctioned organized camp or otherwise sanctioned by the City)
- Significantly altering or degrading the environment and/or significant debris and/or visible waste (particularly if it impacts sensitive land including habitat, flood plain, etc.)
- Camp size is too large (generally over 6 people)
- Articulate public health concern

How to request permanent removal and/or clean-up of a camp:

- All requests will be sent to the City of Portland's One Point of Contact administrator for review.

Property that is privately owned, or owned by a public entity other than the City of Portland, or managed by Portland Parks & Recreation:

- Property that is privately owned or owned by a public entity other than the City of Portland is not affected by these guidelines.
- Private property and non-City of Portland public property owners will receive the same assistance from City of Portland Public Safety Bureaus as they did prior to the implementation of these guidelines.
- **These guidelines do NOT effect current guidelines for Portland Parks & Recreation managed property.**

Definitions

City-sanctioned Organized Camp: a group of campers who have entered into a temporary use agreement or permit with the City for a specific City-owned or leased space; have a City-agreed upon Code of Conduct; and will be provided additional supports by the city (i.e. trash pick-up, portable toilets, etc.)

Permanent Campsite Removal: action taken by a landowner (private or public, including the City of Portland) to restore land to its public use and clean-up the location. This includes, but is not limited to picking up and disposing of debris, garbage, waste and biohazards. The notification and posting protocols will be in accordance with the Anderson Agreement.

Temporary Structure: a structure which requires no nails, screws, or other fastening hardware (i.e. a tent). This does not include City-sanctioned portable housing (i.e. pods)

Blocking a sidewalk: property of any kind on a sidewalk which is not in accordance with existing furnishing zone and high pedestrian use zone policies, including structures or tents.