

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT ACTION PROTOCOL

Updated 10/1/2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Homeless Encampment Action protocol is to develop a standard process for municipalities and special districts to identify, respond to, and remove homeless encampments within Contra Costa County. The procedures set forth in this document are intended to facilitate the removal of encampments while supporting the relocation of the encampment inhabitants into shelters.

PROCEDURES

1. Any entity responding to a report of, or discovering a homeless encampment, will identify any immediate hazard to be addressed. Document with photographs whenever possible. An “immediate hazard” is an imminent threat to the health or safety of the homeless or the community, e.g. a fire, and its removal is exempted from the 72-hour time requirement.
2. Notify the County’s Health, Housing and Homeless Services CORE outreach teams via form at <https://forms.office.com/g/hV9FZC3CUm> immediately upon becoming aware of any encampment. If no response is received within 24 hours, the Coordinated Entry (CE) System Manager can be contacted at (925) 608-6700 or contracostacoc@cchealth.org.
3. The CORE Manager will send the CORE Team to the identified site as soon as practical to find and offer alternative housing and services to any inhabitants. It is desirable that individuals either move into services or vacate the area on their own and remove their own belongings.
4. After the CORE Team has visited the site, the team will contact the notifying jurisdiction of the situation and provide any relevant information.
5. The responsible jurisdiction will arrange to have the encampment posted with the vacate demand. It is encouraged that the posting provides **a minimum of 72 hours’** notice for inhabitants to relocate, be printed in multiple languages as appropriate for the area, and includes the date, time and location of posting. Any “immediate hazard” to health and safety identified is exempted from the 72-hour posting time recommendation.
6. After posting, and up to two hours prior to the time expiration, the CORE Teams will continue to go out to assist individuals to find housing and other services.
7. After expiration of the notice, the encampment may be removed after the following is completed:
 - a. Conduct a quick field review of the encampment (i.e., look around at the items which are in plain view).
 - b. Take sufficient photographs, notes, or otherwise document the condition and extent of area covered by the encampment.

8. Each agency with jurisdiction is encouraged to keep a record of the date, time and location of the removal of a homeless encampment.
9. During removal of the encampment, if any of the following types of items are apparent, reasonably safe and not a sanitary hazard, they should be held by the appropriate maintenance yard for a minimum of 30 days prior to disposal. Items stored may include but are not limited to the following:

Watches	Medication	Eyeglasses
Jewelry	Personal photographs	Personal records

10. The location where the above belongings are stored shall be posted at the encampment site.
11. Anything stored from a location can be kept in one box/container that is marked with the date, time and location of the removal. Possessions are to be released to persons who can identify them in accordance with each agency's policy.
12. Persons illegally trespassing or lodging may be arrested immediately. However, normally law enforcement personnel will only make arrests if someone refuses to leave or is suspected of committing a criminal offense.
13. The property owner is responsible for cleaning up and making safe the area of the encampment. This will include cleaning any hazardous waste found in the area and repairing or replacing items such as fencing.
14. Individuals assigned to remove the encampment should take appropriate safety precautions in the course of the work.
15. If necessary, request the County Health Department's Environmental Health Services to inspect and report on issues involving the protections of the homeless and workers during encampment removal, including hazardous waste.
16. It is the policy not to permit the re-establishment of encampments once they have been removed through this procedure. This will include the following activities:
 - a. After encampment removal, the area will be posted with signs saying "No Camping" or "No Trespassing" and include the telephone number of the CE information and referral hotline – 211.
 - b. The agency with jurisdiction will provide routine patrol of the areas to prevent the formation of an encampment.
17. Any citizen who would like to report an encampment should be directed to contact their local police department non-emergency number.

Any questions regarding this protocol may be directed to the Coordinated Entry System Manager at contracostacoc@cchealth.org

Link to form: <https://forms.office.com/g/hV9FZC3CUm>