



City of Salinas

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Administrative Procedure: Removal of Unlawful Campsite, Bulky Items, and Personal Belongings

This is the Administrative Procedure (“Policy”) for the City’s response to and removal of unlawful homeless encampments and the implementation of Article XIII and Article XIV of Chapter 16 of the Salinas Municipal Code.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a clear and compassionate approach for City staff when addressing homeless encampments located on public property within the city of Salinas. This Policy outlines the steps for proper notification, the removal of encampments, and the provision of resources to individuals experiencing homelessness in accordance with applicable laws, including the U.S. Constitution, California Constitution and State law, and local ordinances.

Homeless encampments on private property are handled by private property owners and may be handled by the Salinas Police Department pursuant to California Penal Code 602(o).

Scope

This Policy applies to all City staff involved in the identification, notification, and removal of homeless encampments, including the Public Works Department, Salinas Outreach & Response Team (SORT), Law Enforcement, Code Enforcement, and other relevant departments.

1. Identification and Documentation of Encampments

1.1. Initial Identification

Homeless encampments may be identified through reports from the public, City staff, or routine inspections by the Public Works Department, Code Enforcement, SORT, or Law Enforcement and shared at the Encampment Response Team (ERT) Assessment meetings.

1.2. Assessment

Before any enforcement action is taken, City staff will assess and discuss the location and size of the encampment, the number of individuals impacted and their service needs, and any potential safety hazards or highly vulnerable individuals (e.g., medically fragile, seniors, children, etc.).

City staff will work together in the identification, notification, and removal of homeless encampments

1.3. Encampment Documentation

City SORT staff will document the location, size, number of occupants, and conditions of the encampment, including photographs and maps of tent structures, if appropriate. A report shall be generated to provide a record of the encampment for future reference and coordination of resources. This information will be shared as soon as possible with the ERT

2. Notification Requirements

2.1. Notice to Individuals in Encampments

At least **48 hours** prior to the removal of any encampment, Public Works staff will provide a written notice. When an encampment has 10 or more people, every effort will be made to provide at least a 15-day notice to allow for a coordinated “Health and Safety Day”.

Pre-Removal Notice: Regardless of the amount of notice time, the notice must be filled out completely and include:

- The removal date, time and location of the planned removal.
- Contact information including address and telephone number for property collection and notice that personal property may be stored for up to sixty (60) days.
- A statement that moving personal property to another location in a public area will not be considered removal of personal property from a public area.
- Instructions on how to contact Salinas Homeless Services Information Line (HSIL) and the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers (CHSP) for assistance in accessing resources and emergency shelters.
- A reminder that personal belongings should be removed prior to the scheduled removal to avoid disposal.

Post-Removal Notice: Written notice will be posted in the area from which the personal property was removed. The Notice will contain the following:

- The date and approximate time the personal property was removed.
- Information on where the personal property was stored including address and telephone number for property collection.
- A statement that the personal property will be discarded after sixty (60) days.

2.2. Language Access

Notices shall be provided in English and Spanish to help ensure that all individuals can understand the information being provided.

2.3. Alternative Notice Methods

If providing written notice is not feasible (e.g., if the encampment is inaccessible), City staff will attempt to notify individuals via other means.

Notification will also be provided to the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers (CHSP) to activate the CoC Encampment Response Notification.

2.4. Special Circumstances

If the encampment is located in an area with known public health or safety concerns (e.g., near hazardous materials, water sources, or areas with frequent criminal activity), the timeline for removal may be shortened, but every effort will be made to provide as much notice as possible.

3. Removal of Homeless Encampments

3.1. Safety and Health Considerations

- Removal of encampments must be done in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of individuals, City staff, and the general public.
- Special consideration should be given to vulnerable individuals, including those with disabilities, elderly persons, or those experiencing severe mental illness, who may require additional assistance.
- Personal belongings should be handled with care. Except as otherwise provided in this Policy, City staff must ensure that personal items are not destroyed or discarded without prior written notification.

3.2. Coordination with Homeless Outreach Services

Prior to removal, Public Works and Police Department will coordinate with the SORT to ensure that outreach services are offered to individuals, providing them with information about available shelters, housing, and other support services, including the coordination of personal belonging

storage support through the Public Works Department.

3.3. Removal Process

- If individuals refuse to relocate or accept services, the removal process will continue.
- Public Works staff or a contractor will clear the site of the enforcement action of waste, debris, and any hazardous materials, in accordance with City protocols.
- The site of the enforcement action should be cleaned up as soon as possible to avoid public health risks and to restore the space for general public use.

3.4. Personal Belongings.

Personal belongings collected at the encampment site that are not a health or safety hazard shall be tagged and stored for not less than sixty (60) days following an enforcement action.

- a. Items that constitute a health or safety hazard and will not be collected and stored include, but are not limited to, (i) toxic sharps: needles, scissors, knives; (ii) chemicals: bleach, paint, oils, etc.; (iii) items (including bedding and clothing) that appear soiled, including, but not limited to, by human waste, dirt, or bodily fluids; (iv) moldy, mildewed items; (v) items that may be infested by rodents or insects: rats, mice, fleas, lice, or bed bugs; and (vi) items that may pose a risk of fire or explosion, combustibles, and propane tanks or any item containing fuel or corrosives or other unidentified liquids.
- b. If personal belongings are co-mingled or littered with needles, human waste, or other health risks, the entire pile of personal belongings may be disposed of.
- c. Bulky items, perishable items such as food, and trash or debris will be disposed of and will not be collected and stored.

4. Record Keeping

Documentation of encampment removals must be stored in a shared drive. Each file should be retained for a minimum of three (3) years and should contain:

- Any photographs taken in connection to the encampment;
- Writings reflecting assessments, evaluations, summaries, receipts and notices, items collected, and items retrieved, if any;
- Name(s) of the contractor(s) involved in the removal;
- Name(s) of the social service providers; and
- Any information regarding personal property

Conclusion

The City of Salinas is committed to addressing homelessness in a manner that is respectful, compassionate, and compliant with legal standards. This Policy seeks to balance public safety and cleanliness with the rights and dignity of those experiencing homelessness, ensuring that individuals are provided with opportunities for services and housing in a manner that fosters their well-being.

This Policy would be reviewed and updated periodically to stay aligned with evolving state laws, court rulings, and best practices for homeless outreach and care.