

County of Santa Cruz

Encampment Response Guidelines



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PURPOSE

Unsheltered homelessness creates health and safety stressors for the entire community, but particularly for those living without shelter. The County of Santa Cruz (County) and its partners recognize that strategies to address these stressors must address the concerns of both unsheltered individuals and the larger community. The most effective long-term solution for addressing encampments is strong collaboration to help people secure stable, safe, and healthy living situations.

This document provides guidelines for engaging with individuals living in homeless encampments within the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County, specifically in situations involving health, safety, or environmental concerns. These guidelines are not intended to override, impede, or restrict law enforcement's ability to respond in a timely manner to calls for service as required by law.

For the purposes of this document, an encampment is defined as:

1. Two or more tents, structures, or assembly of camping equipment or personal property that appears to be used for shelter in areas not designated for that purpose; or
2. A grouping of multiple vehicles (of any type or size) not abandoned and being used by residents as their primary dwellings.

Nationwide, encampments have been removed in the past without adequate coordination between local governments, service providers, and the encampment residents themselves. At the same time, some encampments and their residents have been allowed to stay in locations resulting in health and safety issues for the encampment residents and other community members, environmental impacts, and potential violations of environmental protection regulations. Moving forward, these guidelines call for a balanced approach that upholds the needs and vulnerabilities of unsheltered residents, addresses health, safety, and environmental risks in a timely fashion, and ensures an appropriate coordinated response involving service providers, residents, and County government departments.

These guidelines outline three major processes:

- 1) Recommendations for assessing encampments for health and safety conditions and environmental impacts;
- 2) Recommendations for assessing encampment resident needs and making connections to available housing and community service resources to help them secure a stable home as quickly as possible; and
- 3) If health and safety conditions or environmental impacts warrant encampment closure, how residents (and their belongings) are assisted in the closure process.

These guidelines include the following:

- A recommended Health, Safety & Environmental Assessment Tool and proposed levels of response to address health and safety concerns, if any;
- Review of possible impacts to protected environmental resources;
- Recommended coordination of County departments and service providers, and interaction with those living in encampments; and

- Specifics related to desired roles, outreach and engagement provision, notice requirements, storage of personal belongings, and coordination of available resources.

These guidelines do not supersede local jurisdiction emergency response plans for declared and emerging emergency response operations. These guidelines do not supersede obligations of the County to respond to trespassing, calls for service, or other urgent complaints from private property owners as required under County Code or State law. These guidelines were developed to inform the County's approach rather than mandate a specific response to an individual encampment. The ability of the County to implement these guidelines depends on a range of factors including, but not limited to, the availability of resources, timing, locations, and partners involved. The guidelines are intended to be updated periodically to reflect lessons learned, policy changes, and resource availability.

BACKGROUND

The County first adopted the Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework for Addressing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County in March of 2021 with an updated version adopted in March of 2024. Among the specific goals and activities outlined in the Framework, one specifically states, "work together with city jurisdictions and other County departments to identify and implement best practices for collaborative responses to unmanaged homeless encampments and community health and safety issues that arise from people living without shelter in public places." This document brings together information gathered from multiple local jurisdictions and national technical assistance organizations to outline some collaborative practices that show promise of more positive outcomes for unhoused individuals and other community members.

According to the Santa Cruz County point-in-time count of persons experiencing homelessness conducted in January 2025, an estimated 1,122 individuals were living unsheltered on the day of the count. According to a few research studies, unsheltered individuals inhabiting encampments are more likely to be adults with multiple chronic health issues including behavioral health conditions. The California Policy Lab reported that individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness are 25 times more likely to report they suffer from the tri-morbid combination of physical health conditions, a mental health issue, and a substance-use condition than individuals experiencing sheltered homelessness (50% compared to 2%). Given these needs coupled with a lack of appropriate shelter, affordable housing, and supportive service options appropriate to meet these needs, it can take significant time to engage and connect unsheltered individuals to accessible and appropriate resources to end their homelessness.

Until there is enough safe, decent, affordable, and accessible temporary and permanent housing for everyone, people will continue to live in unsheltered environments. The Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz framework provides a general outline of the additional investments, and system improvements necessary to move the community closer to a goal of ensuring homelessness is rare and brief.

All sectors of the community must work together to mitigate and address health and safety hazards experienced by unsheltered individuals. Protecting the health and safety of all residents, both housed and unhoused, will create a healthier community for all. We need to work together to end our neighbors' homelessness rather than simply relocating unsheltered people from one area to another. Working toward ending rather than managing homelessness, requires medium and long-term strategies developed in coordination with multiple levels of government and community partners including,

people with lived experience of homelessness, affordable housing developers, human services and public benefits, community mental health, substance-use treatment providers, hospitals, law enforcement, public health, community foundations, faith-based organizations, and others.

Short-term, crisis-oriented outreach efforts to address immediate health, safety, and environmental issues related to encampments and the individuals living in them are sometimes necessary. However, helping individuals on a pathway to long-term housing and stability requires more consistent and proactive outreach, engagement, and relationship building efforts focused on understanding individual needs, goals, strengths, and resources. Outreach efforts in a geographic region must find an appropriate balance between responding to urgent health and safety needs and goal-directed relationship building and engagement efforts.

Individuals with criminal histories frequently experience significant barriers to securing employment and housing. Fines and citations, encampment clearings, and other municipal practices and policies that disrupt and displace people create additional barriers and setbacks for people experiencing homelessness, making it more likely that people will remain homeless even longer. Enforcement actions for criminal activity and health and safety violations should be consistently applied to housed and unhoused individuals. Decisions about when enforcement actions are necessary should weigh the impacts and consequences of not addressing immediate health and safety needs against the impacts associated with displacement and enforcement activities with unhoused individuals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles provide a framework for expectations and decision-making. The following principles can help guide approaches to meet the needs of those living in encampments and their housed neighbors.

Principle 1: Delivery of municipal services must respect the needs of all residents, with special considerations for serving the unsheltered population.

- A) *Meet people where they are.* People experiencing unsheltered homelessness may need multiple positive engagements before trust is built. Respect autonomy and a person's decision about whether to engage or to accept services and resources. People may refuse offers initially and change their mind once a trusting relationship is built. Maintain consistency and ensure all commitments are realistic and achievable. Be patient and consult with the individual to identify their needs, how to best meet them, and how to ensure the individual and community can remain safe and healthy.
- B) *Be guided by compassion and empathy in all interactions.* Take special consideration of a person's immediate needs, including making appropriate and reasonable accommodations for people living with physical and mental disabilities. Provide guidance on desired and appropriate behaviors when setting limits.
- C) *Acknowledge a person's unique context and experiences.* Offer services sensitively and appropriately when interacting with individuals, with an awareness of how race, ethnicity, culture, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, and other personal

characteristics impact perceptions and levels of trust. Mental illness and other health conditions may limit a person's ability to understand communications and to communicate effectively.

- D) *Consult with unsheltered residents meaningfully.* Work to listen to the perspective of a person experiencing homelessness and their personal story. Partner together to identify gaps in and opportunities for improved practices. Provide avenues for meaningful feedback. Develop clear grievance procedures and make those known publicly and to individuals when requested.

Principle 2: People experiencing homelessness have the same civil rights as housed residents and should not be subject to discrimination or arbitrary treatment based on housing status.

- A) *Serve the needs of housed and unhoused residents equitably.* People experiencing homelessness are residents who deserve the same access to public services—such as sanitation, restroom and hygiene facilities, and protection by law enforcement—as their housed neighbors. Commit to protecting the civil rights and safety of all people in the community, with the recognition that people living on the streets are at greater risk of violence and victimization.
- B) *Consider the special needs and circumstances of the situation.* When approaching a person experiencing homelessness to conduct municipal services, consider the activity they are undertaking and approach with respect; limit the interruption of life-sustaining behavior such as sleeping in public. The activities of persons experiencing homelessness should not be subject to more scrutiny than that of a housed person.
- C) *Approach with a goal of engagement, not enforcement.* Interactions focused on engagement are more likely to build trust and rapport than those that lead with the goal of enforcement.
- D) *Municipal ordinances should not criminalize homelessness.* Ordinances that limit necessary, life-sustaining activities such as sitting, sleeping, or eating in public spaces unfairly target people living on the streets. In the absence of adequate alternative or private places to undertake those activities, people have a right to perform these activities in public. Evaluate ordinances for disparate impacts on persons experiencing homelessness.
- E) *Pursue alternatives to enforcement, citation, and arrest.* Citing and arresting unsheltered residents for low-level or quality of life infractions and/or life-sustaining activities can be emotionally and physically traumatizing – as well as disruptive to progress toward ending homelessness. Law enforcement officers should use citation or arrest as a last resort and instead promote referrals to services and resources, even when they may have been previously declined.
- F) *Develop policies and integrate systems in support of diversion practices.* Fines and jail time make it more challenging for an unhoused resident to achieve stability, work toward their goals, and secure employment and/or long-term housing. Consider systems improvements such as pre-arrest diversion programs and programs that dismiss citations for low-level, non-violent crimes and connect unhoused residents to services and resources in lieu of fines and/or jail.

Principle 3: All people, both housed and unhoused, deserve access to safe public spaces as well as services that promote health and safety for all.

- A) *Take an outreach-focused approach to encampments and unsheltered persons.* Mobilize outreach staff specially trained to build relationships over time, learn what people need, and connect them to those resources. Coordinate the delivery of municipal services with existing regional resources and services infrastructure with as much advance notice as possible. Existing resources and services often have limited capacity so additional notice time increases the chances of truly connecting unsheltered individuals with meaningful, long-term assistance.
- B) *Explore ways to increase access to public health resources for the public that are also accessible to people experiencing homelessness.* Ensuring that sheltered and unsheltered residents have regular access to clean water, personal hygiene, and sanitation resources, as well as containers for safe needle disposal and hazardous waste promotes public health for all.
- C) *Explore ways to help people without shelter safeguard their important possessions and receive communications.* Provide individuals with information about storage facilities. Help individuals increase their financial resources and access to banking. Assist people with getting and keeping important public documents and storing them in an electronic form or with supportive contact people. Assist individuals with obtaining phones, phone service, and email accounts. Help individuals access general mail services from the post office. Prior to clearing encampments urge individuals to secure all their important possessions before the date of the clearing. Follow storage protocols outlined in this framework. Hours, location, and identification requirements should support the needs of unsheltered residents.
- D) *Ensure public areas are accessible to all by providing clear guidance about access and egress.* Ensure that unsheltered residents are aware of the local standards through adequate notice, and that measures are in place to support their consistent application.
- E) *Follow clear and person-centered protocols when conducting sanitation activities to ensure consistency and regularity.* These guidelines represent some best practices for outreach, notice, and handling of personal property.
- F) *Facilitate opportunities for community education on homelessness.* The expectation for immediate resolutions to unsheltered homelessness drives short-term, counterproductive responses that often fail to resolve homelessness for unhoused residents and may prolong issues of concern in the general community. Publicly share information about the unique needs and stories of people experiencing homelessness. Provide information about the primary contributors to homelessness in the United States and locally. Encourage community members to engage in efforts to address the lack of accessible and affordable long-term residential and housing options in the community.

Principle 4: Local, state, and federal protections for environmental resources still apply when an encampment is in an environmentally sensitive area.

- A) *Educate people experiencing homelessness and community members about environmental concerns and standards.* Local governments are subject to federal, state, and local laws intended to protect the environment. Examples include the federal Endangered Species Act, federal and state water quality standards, and local ordinances.
- B) *Provide people experiencing homelessness and other community members with clear guidance on how to meet environmental standards.* Provide individuals with alternatives that ensure appropriate environmental stewardship while also meeting some of their needs.
- C) *Include the evaluation of environmental resources in developing responses to encampments.* Utilize an assessment tool that evaluates environmental impacts, particularly water quality and habitat near riparian areas and buffers. When making decisions about encampment responses, include staff and agencies with environmental expertise in the process.
- D) *Environmental restoration as deterrent.* Work with public agencies and private property owners to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and restoration of impacted sensitive areas and buffers.
- E) *Environmental hazards.* Ensure that all residents are protected from environmental hazards and hazardous materials. Fire hazards exist in multiple areas throughout the County and fire safety should be considered in encampment assessment and decision-making.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The County's response to encampments requires a coordinated effort across County departments and will involve non-County organizations, and potentially in the future, other jurisdictions. Implementing entities must ensure federal and state regulations related to encampment response are followed. County departments and community organizations involved in planning for and executing responses include:

County Departments

- County Executive Office (CEO) (team coordination, centralized reporting);
- CEO – Public Information Officer, with support from departmental Public Information Officers (public communications);
- Human Services Department - Housing for Health (H4H) (housing services, coordination with community partners);
- Sheriff's Office – Community Policing (noticing, closure enforcement, safety);
- Health Services Agency (HSA) – Behavioral Health (mental health and substance use disorder treatment services and crisis response);
- HSA – Environmental Health Water Resources (water quality, environmental protection and restoration);
- HSA – Public Health (population health assessment and recommendations);
- Community Development & Infrastructure (CDI) – Code Compliance (coordination with private property owners);
- CDI – Environmental Planning (habitat protection and environmental restoration);
- CDI – Public Works (responses in public rights-of-way);

- Mosquito and Vector Control (pest control); and
- Parks Department (responses in County parks).

Response Team

The above County departments will assign a representative to be part of a Response Team to support the CEO in planning for and organizing responses, facilitating Assessments, prioritizing responses based on risk levels, identifying resident needs and potential resources, outreach, post-encampment restoration, post-encampment reporting and evaluation, and continuous improvement of the process. When an encampment response is proposed, the Response Team will assign a member most associated with the risks identified in the Assessment to coordinate the response.

Community Partners

- Continuum of Care (CoC) Housing for Health Partnership (community input, coordination);
- Resident Outreach Team (contracted entity) (resident outreach);
- Relevant County Fire Districts (fire safety);
- Housing Authority (housing services and resources);
- Housing service providers (housing services);
- Tow Service (contracted) for vehicle encampments;
- Clean up entity (contracted); and
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (environmental restoration).

A broader range of additional partners may be engaged as needs arise with specific encampments or during implementation of the guidelines, including the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville.

ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

STEP 1: NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSE TEAM COORDINATION

While reports or notifications of encampments may be received by several different entities, the process followed to organize the Response Team and assess the health, safety, and environmental conditions of an encampment should remain consistent. CEO staff will prioritize which notifications should move forward with initial action, taking into consideration factors such as the number of complaints received, the size of the encampment reported, location, etc. Once prioritized, CEO staff will route notifications to staff designated by the CEO to begin the Response Protocol. Designated staff will notify key departments about the need to gather Health, Safety & Environmental Assessment information (Step 2). Along with regular coordination meetings, CEO staff will oversee the development of a process for public reporting of encampments of concern.

Timeline goal: 1-2 business days after action prioritization is determined.

STEP 2: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

County staff from different departments with different areas of expertise will be assigned to visit the site and gather information for a Health, Safety, & Environmental Assessment (Appendix A). The Assessment is adapted from guidance provided by the Benioff Homeless and Housing Initiative at the University of

California, San Francisco. The Assessment documents the location, number of residents, accessibility, safety, public health concerns, and environmental impacts associated with a particular encampment. The Assessment provides information to help with assessing the need for, and level of, appropriate response. It may not always be feasible to gather all the information included in the Assessment. The Assessment should serve as a guide rather than a required, formulaic, rigid, decision-making tool. The Assessment provides an outline of the areas that County staff will consider in developing response plans for a given encampment. County departments typically engaged in the Assessment process include staff from the following departments:

- Human Services Department - Housing for Health;
- Sheriff's Office;
- Health Services Agency – Public Health, Environmental Health, Behavioral Health, Clinics (Health Care for the Homeless);
- CDI – Environmental Planning.

Staff from CDI – Code Compliance, CDI – Public Works, Mosquito and Vector Control, and the Parks Department may accompany those conducting the Assessment, depending on location and/or encampment type. County supported ArcGIS software may be used to help collect and share Assessment information across County departments.

Resident Engagement/Outreach

Some or all the above staff will work with a designated Resident Outreach Team to help engage with residents. The Resident Outreach Team may consist of County staff and/or contracted representatives from one of the County's community organizations that specialize in assessing resident needs and facilitating access to housing, services, and other resources. The Resident Outreach Team will receive details of the encampment and its residents so they can engage with residents to provide support and connection to resources. Initial engagement will occur as soon as the Team has availability and after any immediate safety concerns are addressed. The goal of outreach is to assess resident needs, connect them with appropriate resources and services, and, in the event of a necessary resident displacement, determine the best next steps for residents and their belongings in coordination with other participating departments.

Timeline goal: 3-5 business days after Step 1.

STEP 3: PRIORITIZATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on Assessment information gathered, the response to an encampment will be determined by the CEO and the Response Team based on the presence and severity of the following factors: population needs, locational factors, public health concerns, safety risks, and environmental impact to sensitive habitat/riparian areas. Utilizing the Assessment tool in Appendix A, encampments will be allocated a high, medium, or low risk level based on – the size, structures, and vehicles involved; the needs of those living in the encampment; the level of organization; location; public health risks; safety issues; and environmental impacts and risks.

- High Priority: High risk levels, including resident safety, imminent health concerns, and severe weather; requires immediate resolution and relocation of residents.
- Moderate Priority: Moderate risk levels; requires removal at non-emergent timeline.

- Low Priority: Low risk levels; no removal or immediate action required, continue outreach and supportive services to help residents transition to stable living situations.

Recommendations

Recommendations will be based on the priority ranking above and include reasons behind the recommended action and next steps required. Recommendations may involve mitigation strategies that require follow-up to determine if any further action is needed, as well as any other entities that would need to be engaged beyond the Resident Outreach Team (e.g., other health, housing, or community service providers).

STEP 4: RESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS AND NOTICE

Targeted notice to residents is critical, as is communication with service providers and other relevant departments for successful implementation of these guidelines. All communication, whether verbal or written, will be done with consideration for the needs of vulnerable unsheltered residents, including the following:

- Language used should be clear and population appropriate and consistent with the language used by encampment residents.
- Multiple verbal and in-person notifications are critical, especially to address any literacy and language barriers, as well as to accommodate thinking in day-to-day or hour-to-hour terms.

For encampments with more than 10 individuals, notices shall be distributed throughout the encampment and posted on each tent, structure, and/or vehicle in both English and Spanish.

For encampments with vehicles, staff will follow noticing requirements outlined in Chapter 9.57 of the Santa Cruz County Code Relating to Abandonment, Wrecked, Dismantled or Inoperative Vehicles.

High Priority Response

If the Assessment determines a high level of risk, health and safety assessors will notify the CEO staff and share the Assessment and recommendations. Communications and notice protocol to residents are as follows:

1. The Sheriff's Office will post written 3-day (72-hour) notices (Appendix B) in visible locations that communicate date/time individuals are expected to vacate the area, how belongings will be handled, and where belongings can be retrieved. Notices will be printed in English and Spanish. If residents are present when signs are posted, the posting entity will also verbally notify residents of these details. Outreach and service provider contact information should also be provided to residents.
2. Concurrently, the Resident Outreach Team will attempt to contact all residents. The Resident Outreach Team is responsible for engaging with residents and determining and tracking next steps for the individuals and their belongings. This will also help residents prepare for and understand the official notice, the reason for the urgency, and help enforce the timeline.

Moderate Priority Response

If the Assessment determines a moderate Level of risk, health and safety assessors will notify the CEO staff and share the Assessment and recommendations. Moderate risk level communication and notice protocol is as follows:

1. The Sheriff's Office will verbally notify residents of specific health, safety, and environmental concerns that need to be addressed to avoid a formal 72-hour closure notification and other citations for illegal activity.
2. Concurrently, the Resident Outreach Team will attempt to contact all residents. The Resident Outreach Team is responsible for engaging with residents and determining how to best support them with complying with health, safety, and environmental expectations.
3. The Response Team will re-evaluate the status of a moderate priority response encampment area at least every 30 days and more frequently if needed. If health, safety, and environmental issues persists, the high priority response protocol will get activated.

STEP 5: RESIDENT PLAN AND CLOSURE

If encampment closure is recommended, CEO staff will ensure careful coordination with all required departments as needed. These policies recognize that additional coordination and resources may be required for encampments of 10 or more individuals. In larger encampments, there are often multiple entities already assisting residents with meeting their daily needs. It will be critical for these entities to understand the closure process as outlined in this document, as well as be involved in closure efforts. Housing for Health will coordinate with additional health, housing, and human services providers that may be required.

Outreach Expectations

During a recommended resident relocation, the Resident Outreach Team is responsible for helping determine next steps for residents and their belongings, in coordination with other key entities involved in the relocation.

The following are expectations of the Resident Outreach Team, to the extent resources are available:

- Engage with encampment residents regarding the need to relocate and the reasons for the closure and offer services and resources as soon as possible after an encampment has been identified;
- Respond to resident questions regarding the contents of the written notice and what to expect;
- Compile a list of encampment residents and details about individuals that will be relevant to successful engagement and linkage to housing and community resources;
- Use list to track engagement efforts and resource linkages;
- Connect individuals to available resources and services based on needs and preferences (e.g., mental health, medical);
- Ensure individuals are linked with the coordinated entry system and complete a connection services request form when needed and appropriate;

- Participate in scheduled meetings with relevant partners as appropriate to track and review needs and status updates for encampment residents, as well as connect residents to housing and community resources when possible;
- Help individuals to move themselves and their belongings to an identified, safe location as soon as possible, while honoring client choice in available options. These options may include a safe parking program, shelter, transitional housing, residential treatment, sober living or recovery residence, or other safe sleeping or living situation options;
- Efforts should not direct or advise individuals to move to another government jurisdiction unless a sustainable housing option, such as residing with friends or relatives, has been confirmed. Guidance should focus on understanding the needs and resources available and helping them develop and implement individualized action plans that support movement toward long-term, stable, housing.

The recommended closure time of day is in the morning while residents are likely still present. Resident Outreach staff shall be present as much as possible before, during, and after relocation activities to help individuals connect with resources. Resident Outreach activities should remain separated from enforcement activities in terms of timing and messaging.

Waste receptacles and bins should be made available to allow residents to choose to discard items or belongings for removal from the site.

Post-Closure Notices (Appendix B) should be posted by the Sheriff's Office in a visible location where the encampment or campsite existed prior to relocation. Notices shall be posted for a minimum of 10 days after the closure and state:

1. The day closure was performed
2. Whether personal property was stored or towed
3. Where personal property will be stored or towed
4. How personal property may be claimed by its owner
5. Contact information for supportive services and housing resources

STEP 6: STORAGE OF BELONGINGS AND SITE CLEANUP

Storage of Belongings

When residents must vacate an area, they are encouraged to take all their belongings. In respecting personal property, some items (see below) that are not removed by residents or left unattended for more than 24 hours will be stored. The County will maintain a log of dates and locations of any closures that occur. Personal property shall be kept for at least 90 days from the date of collection to allow for recovery by its owner. Property left for longer than 90 days from the date it was stored will be discarded.

Items that may be Stored if Found

- Identification documents
- Deeds or other legal documents
- Prescribed medication or essential medical supplies
- Cell phones or other small electronic devices
- Cash or credit cards

Items Subject to Immediate Disposal

- Property that is damaged, broken, or used to an extent such that it cannot be used for its intended or original purposes, as well as any other typical alternative uses
- Property that is severely soiled, stained, torn, damaged or extensively used particularly for an item of clothing
- Property that is not likely to be reclaimed, such as torn or soiled clothing, shoes, blankets, or sleeping bags, damaged or extensively used books or papers
- There is reasonable evidence the owner does not intend to return to claim the property or that the owner intended to dispose of the property as refuse or trash. For example, property that was found in or near a trash can or dumpster or the fact that the property has been left for an extended period of days
- Item is so infested with vermin that it would present a health and safety risk to store
- Bulky items such as mattresses and sheds
- Perishable items such as food
- Controlled substances and contraband

Storage and item recovery will be at no cost to the individual that owns the property. Those wishing to collect their belongings can provide a date and location from which the property was taken and must verify their identity. Individuals will be asked to describe the personal property with particularity. Personal property that is retrieved will be reflected in the log.

Site Clean-Up and Restoration

Sites shall be cleaned up and restored as necessary after all residents vacate the area. CEO staff will identify a department, contracted entity, or community organization to assist with clean-up. The Sheriff's Office will also be present if there are safety concerns. Depending on the health or safety conditions, other entities may be engaged to participate.

If damage to protected habitats has been identified either through the assessment process or during closure, CDFW, Environmental Health, CDI-Environmental Planning, and/or CDI-Public Works will document the extent of damage and necessary restoration depending on the location. Riparian areas and buffers shall be restored, and signage posted to protect resources and prevent further encampments. If located on private property, CDI-Code Compliance may utilize the County's code

enforcement procedures to ensure that the private property owner restores the property, which may include a lien procedure for clean-up/restoration costs. The Parks Department will be lead on restoration in public parks, and CDI-Public Works will be lead on restoration within the public right-of-way. Restoration assistance from contracted partners, the CDFW and/or other state agencies may be necessary. Mosquito and Vector Control will assist with pest control. Public Health will advise on universal precautions and efforts to reduce the spread of any infectious diseases.

STEP 7: DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

CEO staff with support from the Response Team will gather from the participating departments documentation of the entire closure process, including the Health, Safety & Environmental Assessments and recommendation(s), notes from the Resident Outreach Team, and any notes from the clean-up entity.

Within 30 days of closure, CEO staff will schedule a meeting with all entities involved in the relocation to assess any challenges and opportunities for improvement. Improvements to the guidelines will be made if determined through this process. Part of the ongoing evaluation will be to collect and analyze data on residents and the results associated with implementing these guidelines (e.g., how many were housed, how many returned to an unsheltered setting, etc.).

APPENDIX A: HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

Instructions: Gather as much information as possible within the time frame available to complete this collaborative assessment. Individuals involved in the Assessment should only complete sections they feel qualified to complete and for which they have accurate and updated information to report. If an individual does not have enough information to complete part of the assessment, they should note that in the description/notes section of each response area. Responses will be combined to create a more comprehensive assessment of health, safety, and environmental issues impacting people living in encampments and the surrounding community.

Assessment Date:

Assessor Name:

Assessor Department:

Assessor Phone #:

Assessor Email:

Location

Location (Draw on map)

Location General Description/Notes:

Size of Encampment

of estimated people:

of estimated animals:

of estimated tents/dwelling unit structures:

Encampment type (Tent/physical structure, vehicle, or both):

Approximate square footage of accumulated items:

Size Description/Notes:

Questions specific to Encampments with Vehicles:

What types of vehicles are present (i.e. cars, vans, RVs, trucks, bus, combo.):

Estimated number of Vehicles and Operational Status:

Vehicle(s) Registration Status (if known):

Driver License Status of Vehicle Occupants (if known):

Insurance Coverage for Vehicle(s) (if known):

Are there signs of mechanical problems that could make the vehicles unsafe (leaks, flat tires, smoke, strange smells):

Are there other conditions that make the vehicles unsafe (signs of drug manufacturing, use of toxic or hazardous chemicals, pesticides, etc.):

Does it appear that residents are cooking inside vehicles (risk of fire or carbon monoxide)?

Is waste or greywater being stored or disposed of safely?

Are generators or car engines running for long-periods?

Are residents using vehicle batteries, propane or generators for electricity?

Are vehicles hooked up to an electrical or water source?

Vehicle Encampment Notes:

Population Needs

Age. What percentage of the residents are 50 years old or above in the encampment?

☐ 75% or more ☐ 50-74% ☐ 25-49% ☐ Less than 25%

What percentage of the residents are under 21 years old in the encampment?

☐ 75% or more ☐ 50-74% ☐ 25-49% ☐ Less than 25%

Are there minors (under 18 years old) residing in the encampment? If so, estimate number of children and age/s:

Severe Medical Needs. What percentage of residents have severe medical needs that likely require attention before entering housing, e.g., end stage liver disease, unmanaged diabetes, unmanaged kidney disease or need for dialysis, severe lung disease, cancer, etc., in the encampment?

☐ 75% or more ☐ 50-74% ☐ 25-49% ☐ Less than 25%

Severe Behavioral Health Needs. What percentage of residents have severe mental health or substance use disorder needs that require attention (e.g. experiencing psychosis, expressing thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation, overdose risks, etc.)?

☐ 75% or more ☐ 50-74% ☐ 25-49% ☐ Less than 25%

Activities of Daily Living. What percentage of residents struggle with 2 or more activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, and eating)?

☐ 75% or more ☐ 50-74% ☐ 25-49% ☐ Less than 25%

Number of residents with service animals?

Population Description/Notes:

Encampment Organization

Group Cohesion (Scale of 1-5 with 5 being most cohesive and 1 being the least). *Degree to which the encampment operates as a group or as a collection of individuals. High degree of cohesion indicates the entire encampment understands itself as a group and will seek to remain together or near each other versus individually)*

Self-Management (Scale of 1-5 with 5 being most capable and 1 being the least). *High degree of self-management would include formal or semi-formal leadership structures, adopted camp rules or requirements, organization of chores/activities, collective negotiations for camp members.*

Provider Engagement (Scale of 1-5 with 5 being most engaged and 1 being the least). *Degree to which outreach or service providers routinely engage with residents of the encampment. Low engagement (1) = contact once per month or less. High engagement = at least weekly, regular contact.*

Organization Description/Notes:

Location Factors

Proximity to Sensitive Use. Is the encampment near the **main** entrance of a private property OR within 0.2 miles of schools, daycares, nursing homes, playgrounds, ballfields, public gardens, tourist attractions, or hospitals? (Yes/No)

Accessibility Issues. Is the encampment impairing ADA access by blocking ramps, sidewalks, or ADA specific transit infrastructure, e.g., elevators to or from transit stations? (Yes/No)

Challenge to Frequent Public Use. Is the encampment in a location often used by the public, e.g., frequently used park, tourist attraction, highly used walkway or path? (Yes/No)

Construction Zone. Is the encampment within 0.1 mile of a property slated for development of buildings, roadways, utilities, or other infrastructure or near a staging area for a construction project (Yes/No)?

Danger to Encampment Residents. Is the encampment in a location that presents an extremely high risk of serious injury and safety risk for the residents, e.g., on or near freeways, floodplains during rainy seasons, path of an active wildfire, etc. (Yes/No)? If yes, activate hazard protocol.

Public Service Access. Is the encampment in the way of entry or access for public agencies – blocking fire, law enforcement, utility service, etc.? (Yes/No)

Location Description/Notes:

Public Health

Hygiene. Is the location away from any hand hygiene or functional/sufficient sinks?

Sanitation. Is the encampment away from toilets and wastewater disposal? Does the location pose a barrier to proper solid waste storage and disposal?

Infestation. Does the site have large numbers of insects or animals that may cause property damage, create a nuisance, and/or increase the risk or spread of disease, e.g., body lice, rats, mice, bed bugs, fleas, rodents, etc. (Yes/No)? If yes, contact Public Health and/or vector control.

Infectious Disease. Does the encampment contain individuals known to have the presence of diseases that are easily transmittable and create a risk to other encampment residents or the surrounding neighborhood, e.g., shigella, tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, COVID-19, and others. (Yes/No)? If yes, activate public health response.

Public Health Description/Notes:

Safety Risks

Sexual Violence. Have there been reports of forced, unwanted, and/or violent sexual activity in the camp? (Yes/No)

Physical Violence. Have there been reports or observed incidents of physical violence in the camp? (Yes/No)

Weapons. Have there been reports of firearms, knives, bows, swords, or other weapons? (Yes/No)

Uncontrolled Fires. Have there been reports or observed incidents of uncontrolled fires in or near the camp? Unsafe use of camp stoves and barbecues in high fire risk areas? (Yes/No)

Theft. Have there been reports or observed incidents of theft at the camp? (Yes/No)

Conflict. Have there been reports or observed incidents of interpersonal conflict among residents in the camp? (Yes/No)

Hazardous Materials. Are hazardous materials, such as chemicals, paints, oils, or other materials present? (Yes/No)

Safety Description/Notes:

Environmental Resource Impacts

Environmental Resource Areas. Is the encampment within a riparian area, wetland area, protected buffer, or flood area? (Yes/No)

Water Quality Impacts. Are there noted water quality impacts, such as sediment, pathogens, graywater, fecal material, trash, runoff? (Yes/No)

Wastewater Disposal. Is there adequate and effective wastewater disposal for the encampment? (Yes/No)

Vegetation/Habitat Impacts. Is vegetation or protected habitat areas at the site impacted? (Yes/No)

Environmental Resource Description/Notes:

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

<72-HOUR> NOTICE TO VACATE PROPERTY

THIS IS AN OFFICAL NOTICE

**PERSONS REMAINING ON THIS PROPERTY AFTER THE
DATE LISTED IN THIS <72-HOUR> NOTICE MAY BE
SUBJECT TO CITATION, ARREST, AND/OR PROSECUTION
FOR TRESPASS AND/OR UNLAWFUL LODGING
PURSUANT TO PENAL CODE SECTIONS 602 AND 647(e)**

Date Posted: _____

Deputy: _____

**PROPERTY LEFT IN THIS POSTED AREA AFTER 0800AM FOLLOWING
THE DATE OF THIS <72-HOUR> NOTICE IS SUBJECT TO
REMOVAL/DISPOSAL**

A. Personal items that objectively appear to be temporarily unattended, and not abandoned, will be stored for a period of 90 days. These items can be claimed by scheduling an appointment with the <County Storage Entity>. Stored items that remain unclaimed after 90 days (by [__date__]) will be considered abandoned and will be disposed of.

B. The following classes of items will be subject to immediate disposal: (i) trash; (ii) items that are objectively determined to be intentionally abandoned by their owners; and (iii) items that would present a health hazard to store.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact

_____.

The storage facility will be open by appointment only Monday through Friday. If you intend on picking up your stored items, please call the storage facility (phone number _____) ahead of time so the storage facility can facilitate pickup.

Date Posted:_____

Deputy: _____

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

THIS IS AN OFFICAL NOTICE

On [_____], the <*County Storage Entity*> removed and stored personal items from this property that objectively appeared to be temporarily unattended and not abandoned. The foregoing items are being stored and can be claimed by Contacting the <*County Storage Entity*> and will be stored there for a period of 90 days. Stored items that remain unclaimed after 90 days (by [_date_]) will be considered abandoned and will be disposed of.

The following classes of items were subject to immediate disposal: (i) trash; (ii) items that were objectively determined to be intentionally abandoned by their owners; and (iii) items that presented a health hazard to store.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact

The storage facility will be open by appointment only, Monday through Friday. If you intend on picking up your stored items, please call the storage facility (phone number _____) ahead of time so the storage facility can facilitate pickup.

Date Posted: _____

Deputy: _____