

CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS POLICY



POL 18.xx.xx – Houselessness Impact Reduction

Sponsor: Parks and Lands Division

Effective Date: 02/01/2020

BACKGROUND:

Clark County, like many municipalities, is experiencing impacts of camping and unattended or abandoned property on its public lands. Unattended and abandoned property may contain harmful or dangerous items, attract vermin, or present an aesthetic barrier to the use of these lands. Camping on county roads, sidewalks, and egress routes; in the right-of-way; and in parks can also be dangerous and unsafe.

PURPOSE:

This policy is intended to create a unified framework between county departments. It is not designed to solve houselessness. It exists to help reduce the impact of camping on public lands and provides a coordinated and unified method for removal, storage, and disposal of abandoned personal property.

Under this policy, designated county staff shall inspect unauthorized campsites, prioritize them based on hazards and conditions, and remove them as resources and capacity permit. Campsite cleanup is performed after notice and, if appropriate, outreach to campers.

It is the intent of this policy to reduce the impact of houselessness on public lands in the most respectful, safe, and proactive ways. Clark County staff should not remove personal property from public lands without adhering to the policy and procedures. Additionally, County staff are expected to interact with the public in a respectful way.

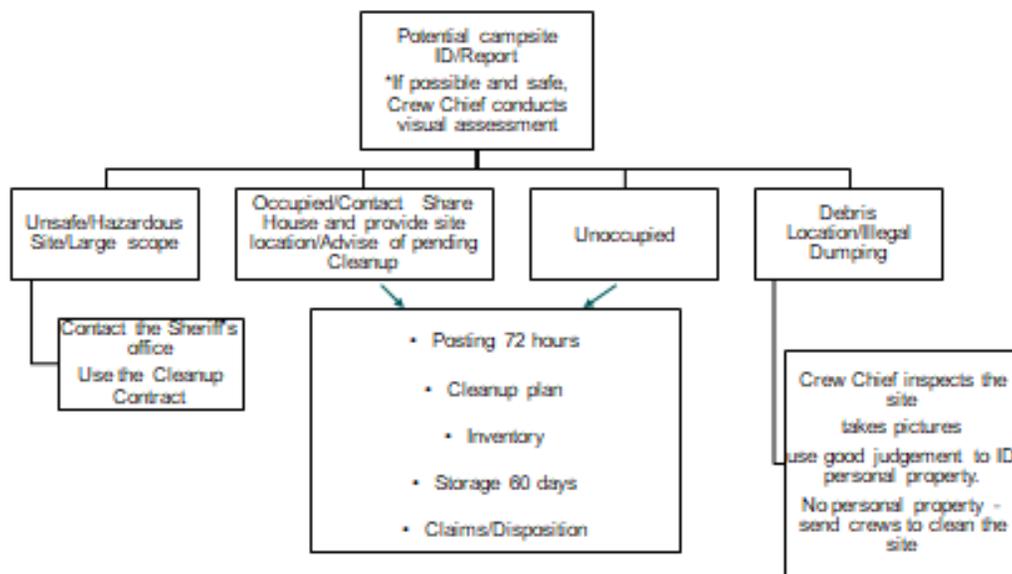
POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Identification, risk assessment, prioritization, plan of action
- Contact the cleanup vendor
- Social Services outreach
- Notice of pending cleanup

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- Cleanup procedures:
 - Catalog and photograph personal property that is removed;
 - Transport and store personal property;
 - Removal and disposal of trash and hazardous or contaminated materials;
 - Chain of custody with law enforcement (illegal materials and weapons)
- Storage and claims process
- Disposal of unclaimed property

Standard Procedures



PROCEDURES

Identification, risk assessment, prioritization, plan of action

Designated county staff (e.g.: Crew Chiefs, Code Enforcement Officers), hereafter “DCS,” will attempt to inspect reported campsites within 24 hours of receiving complaints.

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An unauthorized campsite is any place where bedding, sleeping bag, or other sleeping items, or any stove or fire pit is placed, established, or maintained on public property, whether such place incorporates the use of any tent, lean-to, shack, or any other structure. Camps can be:

1. Occupied Camps – where signs of habitation (e.g. tents, shacks, camp fire) are present.
2. Unoccupied Camps – where no signs of habitation are present.

If it is unsafe for county staff to do the inspection, they will contact the Sheriff's office.

An inspection is required to review various risk factors that might be present at a campsite to determine the level of impact of the campsite. Risk factors can include level of drug use (based on discarded paraphernalia); amount of trash and debris; amount of human waste/bio-hazard; proximity to a school, playground, or private residence; reports of crime; and/or restrictions on safe passage and accessibility.

If, upon inspection, DCS determine that the campsite is too hazardous, is unsafe, contains weapons or bio hazards, or beyond their scope, they will contact their lead/manager. The lead/manager will contact the cleanup vendor.

Beyond scope can include the size of the campsite, number of occupants, how many employees are available to do the cleanup, time of year, and other workload conditions. DCS will evaluate all necessary conditions to determine if the work should be contracted or kept in-house.

In all other cases, the following protocol applies:

Posting notification and exceptions

- DCS will contact the Clark County Sheriff's office (or other police authority in applicable jurisdictions) to request conspicuous posting of Writs of Trespass in the area designated for cleanup. Posting minimum is 72 hours.
- Notices shall be posted before removing personal property.
 - Personal property is defined as anything besides land that may be subject to ownership. Personal property includes ONLY items that have apparent utility. Examples include - backpacks, suitcases, duffel bags, personal identification, food cooking equipment, electronic devices, shoes and clothing, sleeping bags, tents, blankets, medications, dentures, eyeglasses, hearing aids, bicycles, wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, barbecues, stoves, lanterns or flashlights.
 - Some personal property will be considered trash and will be disposed of at the time of clean-up. These are items that lack apparent utility and/or are in an unsanitary condition. Examples include - empty food containers, perishable items in packaging which have been opened, opened beverage containers,

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mattresses, items contaminated with fecal matter, visible blood, urine, or other waste matter that is potentially harmful, and items damaged beyond reasonable use. Bio-hazardous materials must be disposed of according to applicable safety regulations.

- Each Notice shall comply with all the following (see attachment C):
 - Notices will be made of durable material
 - Notices will be securely posted within 30 feet of the items subject to cleanup.
 - Notices will provide the date of posting and the date of proposed cleanup.
 - Notice will be posted at least 72 hours in advance of the proposed cleanup, except:
 - When law enforcement believes there is a presence of illegal activity, other than camping. Illegal activities, for the purpose of this policy, are not determined solely on an individual’s presence at the location.
 - There is the presence of hazardous materials that present an immediate danger to the public.
 - There is a condition at the location that presents immediate danger to human life or safety.
 - ADA or other necessary access is blocked.
 - Notices will also provide the following information:
 - How to access property that was removed from the location.
 - The length of time the property will be stored.
 - Notification that unclaimed property will be disposed of after the time allowed for storage.
- Notices will be posted in English and Spanish.

COUNTY LED CLEANUPS:

If DCS determines that the campsite is within the scope of their crew to cleanup, the following procedures will apply:

- If occupied, DCS will contact Share House Street Outreach at 360-980-0040 to provide campsite location and notice of pending cleanup.
- DCS will contact the Sheriff’s Office to post the campsite for 72 hours.
- Sheriff’s Office will take initial site and posting pictures and send them to the DCS.
- DCS at the cleanup site will take additional photos of posting and the campsite before any cleanup begins.

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- Staff responsible for storage logistics will open a file for the campsite cleanup that includes the date, time and location of sited discovery and posting. The file will also contain all photos related to the campsite.
- DCS will plan/coordinate resources for the pending cleanup, to include contacting the Sheriff's Office for backup, if necessary. Planning /coordination will include arranging for equipment, PPEs, dumpsters, bags, and staff.
- Trash will be broadly documented prior to gathering in appropriate trash receptacles.
- Property that is not deemed trash will be photographed, inventoried, and bagged for storage.
- If possible, crews will do a visual inventory of the contents of bags, backpacks, tubs, and other similar storage containers.
- DCS will ensure that all salvageable items are delivered to storage with the following information attached: date, time, location of the cleanup, and appropriate photographs.
- Storage staff are responsible for managing any claims of property by the owners.
- Disposal of unclaimed property can occur 60 days after the cleanup date.

Debris sites and illegal dumping

If the DCS determines that no salvageable property exists at the location and the cleanup is within the scope of their crew, the following procedures will apply:

- DCS will take pictures and commence gathering and disposal of the trash.
- No notice is required at this type of location.
- Examples include: illegally dumped TVs, construction materials, used diapers, sites littered with needles, and no signs of bedding, tents, camping equipment, or any personal items on the required to-store list.
- These locations still require file documentation with photographs, date, time, and location of cleanup.
- Documentation will be submitted to admin staff for file on the shared drive.

Vendor Cleanups:

If DCS determines that the cleanup is outside of the scope of their crew, the following procedures will apply:

- DCS will contact the county's contracted cleanup vendor.
- The cleanup vendor will comply with the county's regulations outlined in this policy including inventory, storage, and documentation logistics.

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- DCS will coordinate posting and cleanup schedule with the Sheriff’s Office and the cleanup vendor.
- DCS will maintain records from the cleanup and provide them to admin staff to keep in file on the shared drive.

Storage and claims process

The county will provide an accessible storage location where all collected personal property from campsites will be available for pickup.

Admin staff responsible for storage logistics will open a file for each campsite cleanup that includes the date, time, and location of site discovery and posting. The file will also contain all photos related to the campsite.

Storage staff will keep track of incoming property. Staff will follow personal property protocols for storing the property and releasing the property when claimed by individuals.

- The individual making the claim must be able to reasonably identify the property they are claiming, the location of the property prior to removal, and the approximate timeframe the property was removed.
- When ownership is reasonably verified, staff will note in the log book the property being released, and the individual claiming the property will sign and date the log book.
- Unclaimed salvageable personal property will be disposed of after 60 days from the date of the cleanup. Date of disposal will be noted in the cleanup file.

Approved:

 Ahmad Qayoumi, P.E.
 Public Works Director/County Engineer

 Date

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Attachment A

Items required to go to Storage:

- Salvageable personal property such as:
 - Tents
 - Sleeping bags/blankets
 - Boots/shoes
 - Backpacks/purses
 - Prescribed medication or prescriptions
 - Any form of personal identification i.e.: Driver's License, Social Security Card, Birth Certificate, Passport, TPI Card, etc.
 - Bike trailers (only if operable and in working order)
 - Bikes, strollers
 - Shopping carts not connected to a local grocery chain
 - Cell phones/computers/electronic devices

Do not take to storage/dispose:

- Food or liquids/perishable items of any type
- Items soiled/stained with human or animal/waste/blood/or unknown substance(s)
- Items with vermin, bugs, insects, etc.
- Gasoline/kerosene/lighter fluid in any type of container
- Empty gasoline cans or empty gasoline containers of any type
- Empty lighter fluid containers of any type
- Propane tanks/charcoal
- Cooking/heating briquettes
- Wood chips or wood pellets
- Matches or lighters
- Instant electric or battery powered lighters or matches
- Fire extinguishers
- Portable or makeshift toilets
- Chemicals (liquid or powder)
- Bleach (liquid or powder)/ammonia
- Hazardous materials
- Liquor, wine or beer
- Cardboard
- Building material of any type including lumber and wooden pallets

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Turnover to Law Enforcement:

- Weapons
- Ammunition
- Explosives
- Controlled substances

Call Animal Control for pets.

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ATTACHMENT B

Legal References (the list below is not all inclusive)

9.05.100 Camping.

It is unlawful to camp except in such areas as may be provided and designated for such purposes by the county, unless authorized through a park and facility use permit. (Sec. 3 of Ord. 2012-09-02)

9.05.200 Littering and pollution.

It is unlawful to:

- (1) Discard, or to deposit refuse of any kind in or upon any park property, except by placing in containers provided for such purpose;
- (2) Throw, drop or discharge into or leave in waters any substance, liquid or solid which may result in the pollution of said waters;
- (3) Deposit industrial, commercial, or household trash or garbage either on park property or in trash receptacles belonging to county parks. (Sec. 3 of Ord. 2012-09-02)

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Attachment C



NOTICE DATE: _____

ILLEGAL
CAMPGROUND

It is the policy of Clark County to provide 72-hour notice before removing unauthorized property from public lands~~illegal~~ campgrounds.

Property on This~~this~~ campsite will be removed on:

To reclaim property ~~removed from this campground~~, call 564-397-2446. Property unclaimed for 60 days will be destroyed.

Es la póliza de Clark County de dar 72-horas de notificación antes de remover campamentos ilegales.

Este campamento será removido:

Llame al 564-397-2446 para recuperar posesiones removidas de este campamento. Posesiones sin ser reclamadas dentro de 60 días seran destruidas.

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