ASHEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP 3020 - Persons Experiencing Homelessness			
Original Issue:	4/18/2014	**Last Revision:**	
Replaces:	Homeless Persons SOP		

CONTENTS

~~INTRODUCTION~~
~~DEFINITION~~
~~3020.1 GENERAL PROCEDURES~~
~~3020.2 ENCAMPMENTS~~
~~3020.3 OUTREACH~~
~~3020.4 AREA SHELTERS~~
INTRODUCTION
DEFINITION
3020.1 GENERAL PROCEDURES
3020.2 ENCAMPMENTS
3020.3 OUTREACH
3020.4 AREA SHELTERS

ASSOCIATED DIRECTIVES

Policy 501 - Crisis Intervention
~~--~~
Policy 503 - Incident Reporting
Policy 1100 - Property ~~and~~& Evidence Control

INTRODUCTION

~~This directive provides procedures to be used in the interaction with homeless individuals, provides homeless camp protocols, and also information on outreach for assistance from social service resources. The Asheville Police Department treats all persons, including those experiencing homelessness, in a manner that respects their individual rights, human dignity, and community values, while enforcing laws that protect life and property and sustain civic life.~~This directive provides procedures for interaction with persons experiencing homelessness, handling encampments, and providing information on outreach for assistance from social service resources. The Asheville Police Department treats all persons, including those experiencing homelessness, in a manner that respects their individual rights, human dignity, and community values while enforcing laws that protect life and property and sustain civic life. ~~It is the policy of~~

~~the Asheville Police Department to treat all persons, including the homeless, in a manner that respects their individual rights, human dignity and community values, while enforcing the laws that protect life and property and sustain civic life. Whenever possible, APD members should exercise proper discretion and refer homeless individuals to an appropriate social service agency, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.~~

DEFINITION

Homelessness: a person is considered to be experiencing homelessness if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation (such as a car, abandoned building, park, or sidewalk).
- Is living in a shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (such as an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or hotel/motel paid for by a charitable or governmental agency).
- Is exiting an institution where they resided for ninety (90) days or less and resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Encampment~~Homeless Camp~~: for ~~the purposes of~~ this directive, a location where persons experiencing homelessness are sleeping, making preparation to sleep (including the laying down of bedding for ~~the purpose of~~ sleeping), and associated activities, including the storing of personal belongings, making any fire, remaining at or near any tent or other shelter, doing any digging or earth breaking or carrying on of cooking or other activities in support of camping or living accommodations.~~any place where persons experiencing homelessness gather to store belongings and/or sleep. These areas may take a variety of forms not meant for human habitation.~~

Active Encampment: an encampment that is occupied at the time of contact~~,~~ or has signs of recent activity (i.e., burning fires, fresh food, recent mail).

Inactive Encampment: an encampment that is not occupied at the time of contact~~,~~ and has no immediate appearance that anyone has been present in the immediate area.

Outreach: the initial and most critical step in connecting or reconnecting a person experiencing homelessness to needed health, mental health, recovery, social, and housing services that involve the process of engagement, assessing needs, defining service goals, or agreeing on a plan for delivering those services.

Homelessness Initiative Coordinator: the liaison from the City of Asheville ~~Planning and Development Department Planning and Development Department~~ whose responsibilities include conducting research and investigation into ~~issues about homelessness,~~homelessness issues and

formulating recommendations to local government entities and social service agencies to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

3020.1 GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. Absent reasonable suspicion that a person experiencing homelessness is violating the law, department members should approach these individuals as they would any other citizen. Homelessness, on its own, does not constitute reasonable suspicion.

B. No items of personal property will be destroyed or discarded. Persons experiencing homelessness may keep many personal belongings, including documents and medications, in what might initially appear to be an item of refuse.

   1. Department members will adhere to department policy regarding property and evidence in the handling of any property.

   2. No personal property will be searched or seized unless reasonable suspicion or probable cause exists.

C. Persons experiencing homelessness cannot be forced to move to another location if they have a legal right to be present at a location; however, they may be asked to relocate for safety or security reasons.

D. Whenever possible, persons experiencing homelessness should be referred to health, mental health, recovery, social, and/or housing services.

E. Many persons experiencing homelessness suffer from mental health and substance abuse issues that are beyond their control. Officers should follow guidelines in Policy 501 - Crisis Intervention when interacting with persons in crisis. ~~If an officer encounters an individual who is suffering an episode, the officer should notify an APD member trained in Crisis Intervention techniques (CIT officer) to assist, should they not be formally trained themselves. The officers should then complete a CIT incident report and forward that case number to the Homeless Initiative Coordinator.~~

3020.2 ENCAMPMENTS

A. The primary officer responding to a call for service regarding an encampment ~~homeless camp~~ will:

   1. Determine if the encampment is on public (including city-owned) or private property~~.~~; ~~T~~this may be accomplished ~~through the use of~~using the department's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system or Buncombe GIS. Once the property status is determined, the officer will document the location within the related CAD call notes.~~. complete an information-only report in order to identify all~~

~~individuals located at the scene, and document pertinent details of the scene such as the location and conditions.~~

2. Determine if the encampment is active or inactive.

3. Generate a case number related to the CAD call for service for documentation purposes although an incident report may not be required (see Policy 50~~9~~3 - Incident Reporting for situations that require a report).

4. Utilize Axon Capture to photograph and document the encampment area via Axon Capture. Photographs should include any significant items in the vicinity, such as erected tents, temporary structures, dangerous weapons, dangerous materials, etc.

B. If ~~individuals are located~~officers locate individuals in an active encampment, the officers will appropriately identify and document all persons present, and:

~~Instruct those present that they are not allowed to stay on the property and provide them with a Notice of Trespass card.~~

C. ~~Provide cards with information on available resources for persons experiencing homelessness.~~ ~~at the camp, responding officers will instruct them that they have seven (7) days to vacate the property. Officers will provide any individuals with resource cards outlining outreach assistance options.~~

1. ~~If an active encampment is located on private property, the officer will attempt to make contact with the property owner(s) during the call for service and determine if the individuals are trespassing. If a property owner cannot be contacted while the officer is on the scene, the officer will defer to N.C. Gen. Stat 14-159.~~

2. ~~If an active encampment is located on city-owned property, the primary officer will noti~~If the encampment is located on private property, the officer will attempt to contact the property owner(s) during the call for service and determine if the individuals are trespassing. If a property owner cannot be reached while the officer is on the scene, the officer will defer to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-159.11.

3. If the encampment is located on city-owned property, the primary officer will notify any occupants they are on city property and that they are not allowed to remain on the premises and provide them with a Notice of Trespass card.

4. In all cases, the officers will provide individuals cards with information on available resources for persons experiencing homelessness.

D. ~~If the encampment is determined to be inactive and no individuals are located on-site, but the officer finds remaining sanitation issues or dangerous materials on the property, the officer will request the CAD nature code be changed to *Ordinance Compliance* for further follow-up to be conducted by the Community Unit.~~If the encampment is determined to be inactive, and no individuals are located on-site, but the officer finds remaining sanitation issues or dangerous materials on the property, the officer will request the CAD nature code be changed to *Ordinance Compliance* for further follow-up to be conducted by the Community Unit.

E. ~~The primary responding officer, prior to~~Before the conclusion of their shift, the primary responding officer will email the details and case number to the Community Engagement Division~~appropriate Community Resource Officer(s)~~ and District Commander to notify them of the call for service. The ~~district~~ Community Resource Officer will, in turn, notify the Homeless Initiative Coordinator to facilitate outreach workers' referral to the campsite.

F. ~~During the seven (7) days, outreach workers will respond to the campsite and offer to assist with needed social services, as well as moving belongings. The Homeless Initiative Coordinator will let the appropriate Community Resource Officer know when outreach workers have responded and the result.¶~~

~~G. On the seventh day, or soon thereafter, the Community Resource Officer will respond back to the camp location to take appropriate enforcement action of any original inhabitants who may remain or have returned to the property.¶~~

~~H. The Community Resource Officer will notify the property owner that the property should be cleaned along with any trespass letter information. This procedure will apply to private as well as public properties.~~

I. The Community Unit~~Resource Officer~~ will conduct all necessary follow-up, including supplements to the original report.~~follow-up to ensure the property has been cleaned, and complete a supplement to the original report documenting that the property has been cleaned.~~

J. ~~If officers respond to a camp three (3) times in a seven (7) day period and never locate anyone, they can assume that the property is abandoned and the CRO can move forward with contacting the property owner to have the property cleaned up.~~

3020.3 OUTREACH

A. Outreach is important in connecting or reconnecting a person experiencing homelessness ~~homeless individual~~ to needed health, mental health, social, and housing services. Officers should collaborate with physical and mental health experts in order to visit

individuals and ~~encampments~~encampments ~~homeless camps~~ to allow for joint assessment and planning.

B. People experiencing homelessness have a higher risk than the general population of developing exposure-related conditions such as hypothermia and frostbite. ~~These conditions can be immediately life-threatening, and may also increase the risk from dying from unrelated conditions in the future. Increased homeless services, especially additional shelter availability, are necessary to accommodate such amplified needs in the winter~~. A winter contingency plan, known as *Code Purple*, has been developed to provide overflow space during the winter months to provide additional protection against harsh elements. Typically this will be initiated when temperatures fall below ~~Each shelter generally bases its overflow on weather conditions below~~ 32 degrees.

C. [Reach out to Community Unit for follow-up with local providers and resources if needed/ Community Engagement Division responsibilities for outreach activities?]¶

~~3020.4 AREA SHELTERS~~¶

~~ABCCM Steadfast House~~¶ ~~*Women and Children Only*~~¶	~~(828) 259-5365~~¶
~~ABCCM Veterans Restoration Quarters~~¶ ~~1329 Tunnel Road~~¶ ~~*Men Only - Winter Overflow*~~¶	~~(828) 259-5333~~¶
~~ABCCM~~¶ ~~30 Cumberland Ave~~¶ ~~*Monday-Friday hours only*~~¶	~~(828) 253-5300~~¶
~~A-Hope Day Center~~¶ ~~19 N Ann St~~¶	~~(828) 252-8883~~¶
~~Helpmate~~ ~~*Women and Children Only, Domestic Violence*~~¶	~~Crisis Line: (828) 254-0516~~¶ ~~Office: (828) 254-2968~~¶
~~Rescue Mission~~¶ ~~225 Patton Ave~~¶ ~~*Winter Overflow*~~¶	~~(828) 254-0471~~¶
~~Salvation Army~~¶ ~~297 Haywood St~~¶ ~~*Winter Overflow*~~¶	~~(828) 253-4723~~¶