



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE

KEVIN HALL

TRAINING BULLETIN # 25-008

DATE: 8/12/25

Title: Enforcement of Camping and Obstruction on Public Property

Reference: HOME Ordinance (C36679 – Adopted June 30, 2025)

Effective Date: 8/8/2025 (Modified: 8/11/2025)

Approved By: Assistant Chief Matt Cowles

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this training bulletin is to establish clear guidelines for Spokane Police Department officers when enforcing the provisions of the Home Ordinance regarding unauthorized camping and obstruction of public property. The ordinance seeks to balance public health and safety with compassion, connecting individuals with shelter, treatment, and support services prior to criminal enforcement

2. TRAINING BULLETIN STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is the intent of the Spokane Police Department to:

- Protect public access to City-owned properties and rights-of-way;
- Use enforcement as a last resort, prioritizing outreach, engagement, and voluntary compliance;
- Ensure consistent, constitutional, and transparent enforcement practices;
- Document and track enforcement actions in a manner that ensures accountability.

3. DEFINITIONS

Many of the definitions have been modified or their names changed, so it is imperative that officers familiarize themselves with the definition section in SMC 12.02.1001.

4. ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES

A. Officer Responsibilities

1. Officers shall respond to reports or observations of unauthorized camping or obstruction on public property.
2. Officers shall determine if conduct meets the threshold of “knowingly obstructing” or “camping” as defined in the ordinance.

B. Engagement-First Approach

1. Officers shall notify the individual(s) of the violation and provide a reasonable opportunity to comply.
2. Suggestion for Compliance and Same Law Enforcement Interaction:

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- Time- Frame: Give the individual a specific timeframe to comply and indicate you will return to ensure compliance. This will be situational, and reasonableness is the key.
 - Distance: Warn the individual that when officers return to confirm compliance, the individual should not be re-engaging in the same conduct within eyesight of the officers.
3. If the individual complies after notification, **no enforcement action** shall be taken under this section.

C. Outreach Referrals

1. If available, officers shall initiate contact with the Spokane Homeless Outreach Team or a City-designated outreach provider, *if the individual agrees to engage in treatment.*
2. If the individual accepts navigation or relocation assistance to a shelter, treatment, or housing solution, **no enforcement action shall be taken.**
3. Until a list of City-designated outreach providers and/or Spokane Homeless Outreach Team is operational, officers shall utilize existing outreach/service providers (List of Resources attached).

D. Enforcement Actions

1. **Misdemeanor citations or custody** may be initiated under the following circumstances:
 - The individual **refuses to comply after notice**;
 - The individual **refuses outreach/referral assistance.**
 - With regard to removal of an encampment, if the conduct presents an **immediate threat to public health or safety**, as outlined in SMC 12.02.1009(B).
 - The individual **initially complies but reoffends** during the same interaction.
2. Officers must **document the warning, offer of services, and individual's response**, either in a case report or CAD notes (see 6.1 below).
3. Nothing in this ordinance precludes officers from utilizing other enforcement options to resolve the situation at hand if more appropriate (see Section 7 below).

5. PRIORITY ENFORCEMENT ZONES

The following areas shall receive **expedited response and prioritized outreach/enforcement**:

- Within **1,000 feet** of:
 - K–12 schools (public or private)
 - Parks and playgrounds
 - Licensed child care or early learning facilities
 - Emergency shelters

Officers shall emphasize **voluntary compliance** and **coordinated removal efforts** when encountering encampments in these zones, *however outreach and/or enforcement will be expedited.*

6. REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION

1. Officers shall log all non-arrest/citation under the designated call type for ordinance violations.
 - Suggestion: Officers enter notes into CAD outlining basic actions such as warnings, compliance, or acceptance of outreach/services
2. Citation/ Arrest Reports must include:
 - Description of the violation
 - Summary of warnings issued
 - Outreach efforts offered and response received
 - Outline of events that resulted in citation/arrest due to refusal to comply and/or accept services or immediate threat to public safety.



3. Body-worn camera activation is mandatory for all contacts under this ordinance.

7. OTHER ORDINANCES AND STATUTES

A. SMCs:

- i. Loitering for Drug Purposes: 10.60.030
- ii. Urinating/Defecating in Public: 10.60.040
- iii. Lewd Conduct: 10.60.050
- iv. Protection Against Harm to Waterways 12.02.1003

B. RCWs:

- i. Disorderly Conduct: 9A.84.030
- ii. Criminal Mischief (3+ people) 9A.84.010
- iii. Obstructing a LEO 9A.76.020
- iv. Criminal Trespass 2nd 9A.52.080
- v. Reckless Endangerment 9A.36.050
- vi. Crossing Streets by Pedestrian 46.61.240 (Civil)
- vii. Pedestrian on Roadway 46.61.250 (Civil)

C. Park Rules and Regulations:

- i. After hours in Park: 12.06A.040J(4)
- ii. Park Rangers can trespass individuals which allows for enforcement for criminal trespass second degree.

