



City and Borough of Juneau
City & Borough Manager's Office
155 Heritage Way
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Telephone: 586-5240 | Facsimile: 586-5385

TO: Leadership Team
DATE: April 21, 2025
FROM: Robert Barr, Deputy City Manager
Derek Bos, Police Chief
Donna Pierce, Interim Parks and Recreation Director
RE: Public camping and homelessness

Juneau is not unique among municipalities in Alaska or the United States in struggling with camping on public and private property. Similar to past years, as winter ends, the challenges associated with camping grow. Staff in various departments are commonly faced with difficult scenarios that do not always have clear pathways towards resolution.

This memo provides guidance to departments in order to support staff working collaboratively with individuals experiencing homelessness. The goal is to achieve successful and safe resolutions when addressing the challenges related to camping.

It is the policy of the CBJ to address camping related issues with the lowest level of burden placed on the camper as possible, balanced against the public impacts resulting from camping activity, employing compassionate and firm behavior. This means that when public impacts are low, non-existent, and/or projected to remain low, enforcement is unnecessary. As impacts increase, enforcement begins to become necessary. Impacts that may warrant enforcement include:

- Significant accumulation of uncontrolled garbage
- The presence of visible human waste
- Problematic drug use or significant hazardous waste
- Unsecured bear attractants
- Substantiated complaints from the public with respect to camping activity preventing the typical public use of the public land in question
- Requests from property owners when camping is occurring on private property
- Recurrence of behavior that previously required enforcement action that staff reasonably believe will require a larger enforcement effort if not addressed soon
- Increase in criminal activity / related calls for service at nearby businesses
- Campsite turns into an encampment with 3 or more tents

While Juneau is not unique in struggling with challenges related to homelessness, the community provides numerous services available to support individuals experiencing homelessness both through public funding and community non-profit organizations. Before enforcement action takes place, efforts should be made to resolve the specific situation by connecting individuals to supports to the extent they are available.

When supports are unavailable or insufficient, individuals should be provided guidance on minimizing/eliminating impacts at future campsites on public land. This guidance should include:

- Disposing of garbage and waste daily with JPD provided garbage bags when available

- Keeping campsite sizes small – generally, enforcement becomes more necessary as campsite size grows
- Camping on unimproved public land, as opposed to private land, public facilities (e.g. parking garages) or developed recreation areas (e.g. parks and playgrounds)
- Avoiding sensitive rivers, streams, and fish spawning areas

For campsites on unimproved public land, a problematic campsite is one that is unsanitary, attracts criminal activity, results in a large volume of calls due to activity or its placement, or results in an encampment (3 or more campsites). When JPD staff are unable to make a determination if a campsite should be disbanded, the situation should be reported up through the chain of command; the Chief will have the final say if a campsite should be dispersed with consultation from the Manager's Office, if necessary.

This guidance memo will be updated as policy and/or direction changes.