

TITLE: INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	NUMBER 11.14
EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-01-2020	PAGE 1 OF 4
REVISION HISTORY: (Adopted 03-01-2020)	

11.14.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to formalize the procedure by which the Greensboro Police Department interacts with individuals experiencing homelessness within the City of Greensboro to ensure compliance with Departmental Directive 1.8. This policy will provide guidance for Greensboro Police Officers as they interact with and assist homeless individuals, including proper documentation, knowledge of terms and definitions, as well as support providers that are available.

11.14.2 POLICY

The policy of the Greensboro Police Department is to treat persons experiencing homelessness in a manner that protects their needs, rights, and dignity, while providing appropriate law enforcement services to the entire community. Employees of the Greensboro Police Department shall afford all people experiencing homelessness with the same rights and treatment as they would to any and all individuals with whom they normally encounter while on duty.

11.14.3 DEFINITIONS

Experiencing Homelessness: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate housing, or has a primary day or night-time residence that is:

- (a) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- (b) An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- (c) A public or private place not designed for human habitation, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

Unsheltered: Living in a place not meant for human habitation, to include but not limited to motor vehicles, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings (on the street).

Encampment: Locations where one or more people experiencing homelessness live in an unsheltered area, either on public or private property.

Letter of Intent: Written agreement kept on file in Watch Operations, indicating that the owner/designee of a commercial property will assist with the prosecution of trespassing occurring after business hours (valid for 3 years).

Coordinated Entry Lead: The primary organization through which the Center City District Community Resource Officers will forward referrals for services on behalf of people experiencing homelessness.

11.14.4 PROCEDURE

An officer that conducts a voluntary encounter with a person experiencing homelessness is encouraged to offer advice about shelters, services, or other assistance that is available. The person is then free to choose whether or not to accept any referral.

An officer self-initiating or responding to a call involving a person he or she believes is experiencing homelessness will complete any lawful actions deemed appropriate for the call. Officers will attempt to offer information concerning assistance and services when appropriate.

Voluntary encounters, self-initiated calls, and calls for service involving persons who are unsheltered optimally will result in the officer inquiring into the circumstances contributing to that individual's or family's homelessness as appropriate in order to determine which assistance and services to offer the individual or family. Officers will also begin information gathering for the purpose of completing a Field Contact Form to be forwarded to the Coordinated Entry Lead for follow-up. This information gathering will be done with the person's voluntary compliance. Officers should be aware that individuals may show concern or fear answering questions surrounding the individual's biographical data and information, i.e., their specific living location.

The following is a list of information officers should attempt to gather while speaking with the subject, but is by no means a complete list, as specific circumstances affecting the individual can dictate the needs for additional inquiry:

- Biographical information (name, date of birth, sex, race)
- Any available contact information for the individual or family
- Any immediate needs (medical, mental health, food, etc.)
- Are they familiar with resource providers
- Have they previously received a list of resource providers by GPD
- Location where individual routinely resides
- Veteran status

Once the necessary information has been gathered and the officer has completed the call for service, the officer will complete an electronic Field Contact Report in RMS with all the above information entered into the block or notes section of the report, including location of the call. Additionally, officers shall provide to the subject experiencing homelessness, a Homeless Resources Quick Guide with recommendations on specific providers that may assist the person or family.

11.14.5 DOCUMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

It is the goal of the Greensboro Police Department that information gathered from persons experiencing homelessness, for the purpose of providing assistance, shall be forwarded to the proper resource providers for referral and follow-up. Because of this, it is vital that these interactions are well-documented electronically on a Field Contact Form with the reason code "Unsheltered" selected. These contact forms will then be accessed by the Homeless Assistance Resource Team Officers (Center City District CRO's) who will forward the information to the appropriate resource provider for follow-up. In general, this will be the Coordinated Entry Lead, but the needs of the individual will assist in determining the appropriate service provider.

TITLE: INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	NUMBER 11.14
	PAGE 3 OF 4

Any time an incident report is completed involving someone experiencing homelessness; the additional NIBRS codes (**UNSHVI – Unsheltered Victim or UNSHOF – Unsheltered Offender**) should simply be added to the classification section of the report. To ensure a referral is made, a Field Contact Form must also be pursued for completion in this case. A Field Contact Report may also be completed on any person, at any time, who does not fit the definition of individuals “Experiencing Homelessness” or “Unsheltered” but who wishes to receive information concerning resources available through service providers.

11.14.6 HOMELESS ASSISTANCE RESOURCE TEAM (HART) OFFICERS

HART Officers are assigned to the Center City District – Center City Resource Team and provide supplemental support for these squads within the Center City District of the city. The primary responsibility for all Field Contact Reports involving homeless persons are the responsibilities of HART Officers, who will in turn direct the information to the appropriate resource providers for follow-up. HART Officers will also be the primary contacts for information related to homeless encampments and Letters of Intent. HART Officers will also be responsible for maintaining a current list of resources and providers for homeless/unsheltered persons.

HART Officers will act as liaisons between community service providers and the districts/other district Community Resource Officers, regarding homeless/unsheltered concerns.

11.14.7 HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS AND LETTERS OF INTENT

Officers encountering homeless subjects living in an encampment will refer to the City of Greensboro’s Guidelines for Homeless Camp Response for further instructions on the process and policy of having the camp removed. These guidelines include identifying and making contact with the owner of the property, notifying the camp occupants of the trespassing, making contact with the appropriate resource provider for timely follow-up with the occupants. Officers should only coordinate the possible removal/clean up. Officers will not physically assist with the dismantling of camps. These guidelines apply to camps located on city owned/maintained property or if it is private or state-owned property. All homeless camp locations identified, should be forwarded to the respective district Community Resource Officers for investigation and possible removal. District Community Resource Officers will collaborate with HART Officers for assistance with these matters.

Letters of Intent are used in the prosecution of second degree trespassing violations occurring on commercial properties only where the offense occurred during closed business hours. When property owners wish to prevent and prosecute unauthorized access to their property after hours, filing a Letter of Intent with the police department is required. The Greensboro Police Department’s Letter of Intent sets forth the necessary steps the property owner must take for trespassers to be successfully charged and prosecuted. Trespassing occurring during regular business hours will be handled in the standard process by making contact with the property representative or owner at that time.

If a property owner wants to file a Letter of Intent, notification of this along with a name and contact number, shall be made to the Community Resource Officers of the respective district. CRO’s will then make contact with the property owner and provide further information on the steps necessary to file a Letter of Intent. Copies of any Letters of Intent filed will be forwarded

TITLE: INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	NUMBER 11.14
	PAGE 4 OF 4

to Watch Operations where an up-to-date list will be maintained on-hand. Encampments discovered on city-owned property will be forwarded to the appropriate CRO for follow-up.

11.14.8 TRAINING AND EVALUATION

HART Officers will conduct an annual review of this policy with the collaboration of organizations and resource provide who serve people experiencing homelessness and the unsheltered. Examples of these providers are, but are not limited to, the Interactive Resource Center (IRC), YWCA, Greensboro Urban Ministries, and the Continuum of Care (CoC). This evaluation is to ensure that policy and practices are current. A routine review will also be conducted of these organizations' services. Any significant changes affecting services provided shall be conveyed through ongoing training to officers of the Greensboro Police Department.

Attachments: Homeless Resources Quick Guide
Guidelines for Homeless Camp Response
Letter of Intent