



GUIDANCE: ADDRESSING ENCAMPMENTS

The State of California encourages local jurisdictions to continue to employ person-centered, Housing First, and trauma-informed approaches when addressing the needs of persons living in encampments on public property. These evidence-based practices ensure services are strategically coordinated and deployed prior to any enforcement effort and ensure the best possible outcomes for all involved.

Before removing an encampment on public property, Cal ICH recommends that a local government:

- ✓ Is actively aware of interim housing capacity, including congregate and non-congregate shelter (i.e. motel vouchers), that is **immediately available** to serve persons in the encampment in question.
- ✓ Has a clear policy for the handling and storage of unattended personal belongings of persons in encampments.
- ✓ Provides as much advance notice of a removal action as possible. Cal ICH recommends a **minimum of 48 hours notice**, unless imminent threats to life, health, safety, or infrastructure require a shorter notice period, to persons living in the encampment and to any service provider actively serving and/or engaging with the encampment in question. Cal ICH recommends that the notice include:
 - The anticipated date and time of the removal action.
 - Information on services, including shelter, that are immediately available to persons living in the encampment.
 - Information on how unattended belongings will be handled the day of the removal action, including what will be stored and how they can be recovered.

Cal ICH further recommends that local governments are **actively aware of and engaging with current local projects and/or efforts** (i.e. Encampment Resolution Funds) serving the encampment in question and encampments in general.

Cal ICH encourages local governments to make every effort to **identify and offer shelter** to persons living in an encampment in advance of taking action to remove an encampment. If shelter cannot be secured prior to removal despite these efforts, it's recommended that a local government ensure that there are reasonably accessible locations within the jurisdiction where a person may lawfully sleep.

Where an encampment presents specific safety hazards, it may be appropriate for a local government to remediate those hazards prior to or independent of a removal operation, for example addressing tapped electrical wires, removing dangerous items including apparatuses involving open flames, weapons, and controlled substances, or dismantling or removing structures within an encampment that pose a specific hazard.