



# HOMELESS IN DOWNTOWN

## Quality of Life FAQ's

The 2015 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count showed a 12% increase in homelessness since 2013. The number of tents, makeshift shelters and vehicles housing the homeless increased from 5,335 to 9,535 during this time. As the homeless population continues to grow, BOMA Greater Los Angeles is working with the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the local Business Improvement Districts to address concerns regarding property owners' rights and the rights of homeless individuals. As part of that effort BOMA is providing the following to answer questions property owners may have concerning encampments, abandoned property and homeless outreach services.



### Q: What are the laws regarding encamping or sleeping on "Public" property?

**A:** Los Angeles has unique circumstances which dictate this use of the public right-of-way. While being homeless is not illegal, Los Angeles City Ordinance 41.18d does prohibit sleeping or encamping on a public sidewalk. Since 2007 however, the City of Los Angeles has been party to the Jones Settlement which allows individuals to sleep on sidewalks between the hours of 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. citywide. The parties agreed that sleeping on public sidewalks will be allowed until 1,250 units of permanent supportive housing for the homeless have been constructed within the City. The City has been acting in good faith and continues to invest in permanent supportive housing; it will fulfill the promise of 1,250 units in fall 2015. It is currently being discussed how the City will move forward once this goal is met in the Homelessness & Poverty Committee.

### Q: What can I do if people are sleeping in the doorway to my building (during or after business hours)?

**A:** Despite the Jones Settlement, it is never permissible for someone to encamp within 10 feet of an entrance or exit of a building, parking lot or loading dock. If there is a person sleeping in the doorway of your business, ask them to leave. If you have asked the person to leave and they refuse, you can either call the Los Angeles Police Department or call your local Business Improvement District. They will come out and assist by providing uniformed assistance.

### Q: Is it legal for the homeless to sleep on private property?

**A:** No, access and usage of private property are still subject to guidelines and rules as set by the property owner. If the property is open to the public, signs need to be posted at points of entry stating the rules and regulations for the property and should have verbiage pertaining to sleeping, lying and encamping. In order ensure that these rules are enforceable, legal counsel should be consulted for proper verbiage.

### Q: Why do I see shopping carts, tents and other items left unattended on the sidewalks?

**A:** In *Lavan vs. City of Los Angeles* an injunction was issued that prevented the City from removing and disposing of personal property and other items from the sidewalks or streets unless the City could establish that the goods were actually abandoned. The order was appealed and in 2012, the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit supported the injunction, holding that the removal and immediate destruction of a person's unattended property was a violation of the United States Constitution. In compliance with this injunction, the City is currently requiring a 24 hour posting on personal items prior to removal and storage of removed items for 90 days before disposal. These requirements do not apply to items which pose an immediate threat to public health and safety.

**Q: There is an encampment in my community; is there anything I can do about it?**

**A:** The city's Bureau of Sanitation has services available to ensure that public safety concerns are met. If you would like to report abandoned property or an encampment, you may contact LA Sanitation by calling the Service Request Hotline at (800) 772-2489 (CITY), dialing 311 for citywide services, emailing 311@lacity.org, or visiting [www.lacity.org/MyLA311](http://www.lacity.org/MyLA311).

**Q: What can I do if someone is panhandling on my property?**

**A:** Panhandling in the public right of way is only illegal if it is aggressive; however, panhandling inside or on private property is based on the property owner's discretion. Posting signage, denying access by closing off areas, or restricting access will help to limit panhandling on private property.

**Q: Should I provide food directly to the homeless?**

**A:** There are numerous homeless resources in Downtown Los Angeles where individuals can obtain food and other services. Homeless individuals are best served by utilizing those resources. For example, the Union Rescue Mission at 545 S. San Pedro Street provides a comprehensive array of services which include food, shelter, clothing, medical and dental care.

**Q: There is a person who looks like they need help and I want to help them, what should I do?**

**A:** If you witness a homeless person in need of services contact the Emergency Response Team of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority at 213.225.6581. This hotline operates Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Q: What do I do if I see someone who is homeless with a child?**

**A:** Los Angeles County has built a system of Family Solutions Centers who will help move families with children off the street immediately and into a shelter or motel. They will then work with the family to find permanent housing. Call "211" and ask for a referral to a Family Solutions Center near you.

If you are concerned for the safety of the child, call "911" and tell the dispatcher the location of the family.



**Q: Where can homeless individuals use the restroom?**

**A:** Currently, the Midnight Mission has 24/7 access to bathrooms and is located at 601 S. San Pedro Street.

**Q: Where can homeless individuals find shelter?**

**A:** There are multiple service providers in the Downtown area who have shelter beds including the Union Rescue Mission, Midnight Mission, Los Angeles Mission, Emmanuel Baptist Mission and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. These services are concentrated in the area of 5th and San Pedro Streets and combined have approximately 1,800 shelter beds.



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Shelter Partnership, Inc.

**BOMA Greater Los Angeles** is a 501(c)6 nonprofit trade association representing commercial office building owners throughout Los Angeles County. BOMA/GLA serves as the preeminent voice of the commercial real estate industry and works to enhance value through advocacy, education and networking.

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**Shelter Partnership, Inc.** is a nonprofit organization solving homeless in Los Angeles County through policy analysis, program design, resource development, and advocacy in support of agencies and local governments that serve the homeless. The Shelter Partnership's S. Mark Taper Foundation Shelter Resource Bank serves more than 200 agencies annually by securing and distributing new goods (non-food) to agencies serving the homeless. Its policy and program development efforts focus on the creation of new housing opportunities for individuals and families who are homeless.

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In order to make a positive change, BOMA/GLA and Shelter Partnership encourage you to direct your resources toward existing nonprofit organizations and their programs. Go to <https://www.bomagla.org/DTLA-Homeless-Volunteer-Opportunities> for more information on volunteer and donation opportunities.