

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT

Encampment Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure:

- The Town has a safe, respectful, and effective response to homeless encampments on municipal property,
- The Town balances the rights of individuals without an adequate place to sleep against its duty to maintain public safety and health.

2. SCOPE

This Policy establishes procedures for the Town of Northfield to address homeless encampments on municipal property. This policy provides the municipality effective and respectful procedures when interacting with persons camping on municipal property; whereby the Town will assess the person's situation and determine whether outside human resource agencies and/or local public safety staff should be contacted to assist the persons. The Policy also establishes a respectful procedure for the removal of persons, and their property, from municipal property through either a voluntary or involuntary approach.

3. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all municipal property, including sidewalks and roadways within the Town of Northfield.

This Policy does not apply to private property.

This Policy shall not restrict law enforcement from responding to an incident involving persons camping on municipal property committing a criminal act.

4. POLICY

The Town, when implementing this policy, shall respond to persons camping on municipal property in a respectful manner and shall adhere to the following procedures.

4.1 Initial Contact with Persons Camping on Municipal Property.

1. Municipal employees encountering persons camping on municipal property shall notify the Town Manager's Office immediately and shall not interact with the persons.
2. Upon receiving a report of an encampment, the Town Manager or designee shall start a report on the situation using the attached form (see APPENDIX 1).

4.2 Contact with Persons Camping on Municipal Property.

The Town Manager or designee shall take the following steps when investigating a report of an encampment:

1. Visit the site and make an initial assessment of whether the persons need medical attention, and if so, contact Northfield Ambulance
2. Contact local law enforcement to obtain possible background information on the encampment prior to visiting the site,
3. Make an initial assessment of whether there is possible criminal activity, and if so, contact the Northfield Police Department.
4. Assess whether the individuals intend to remain on the property.

5. If the individuals intend to remain on the property, politely ask that they voluntarily leave the property.
6. Provide the individuals with information regarding available human resources and services.
7. If the individuals intend to remain on the property, contact human resources agencies to inquire as to available programs and housing options.

4.3 Compliance

The Town Manager or designee shall adhere to the following procedures regarding possible removal of individuals from an encampment.

1. Ask the individuals to leave the property voluntarily.
2. If the persons do not leave the property voluntarily, call a representative of an appropriate state or local agency to assist.
3. Offer shelter or shelter referral.
4. If individuals are unable or unwilling to voluntarily comply, the Town Manager may intervene and consider the following options.
 - a). Seek out restorative justice opportunities and sleeping options.
 - b). Post the area against Trespassing and have the individuals cited and/or removed in coordination with the State's Attorney.

4.4 Unattended Encampment Clean-up Policy

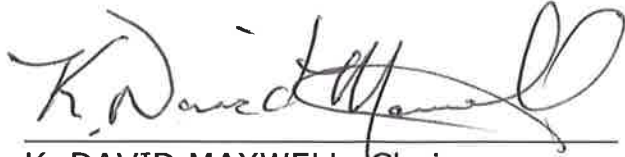
The Town Manager or designee shall adhere to the following procedures regarding removal of materials from an unattended encampment in which no individuals are present.

1. Leave a packet of materials and instructions to include:
 - a). Sleeping on municipal property is not allowed,
 - b). The time and date of visit and the time and date when Town representatives will return to the site to remove materials, which will be seven days after the initial visit,
 - c). A statement that any materials taken from the site will be stored out of the elements and properly labeled.
 - d). Copies of supportive resources.
2. Take photos of the site and materials prior to removing any materials,
3. Take photos of the site after the removal of all materials,
4. Leave a note at the site providing contact information on how to retrieve materials.
5. Store removed material in the basement of the municipal building.

4.5 Disposal of Unclaimed Property

The Town Manager or designee shall make a reasonable effort to allow the owner of the unclaimed material to retrieve their property. If the unclaimed property is not retrieved within 30 days from the date of removal from the encampment site, the Town is authorized to dispose of all unclaimed property.

**DATED AT NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
THIS 11th DAY OF JULY 2023**



K. DAVID MAXWELL, Chair

MERRY SHERNOCK



LYDIA PETTY, Vice-Chair



JOHN B. STEVENS



CHARLES L. MORSE



Select Board, Town of Northfield, Vermont

