

HOC Statement on Homeless Vital Record & Property Loss (DRAFT for review)

To: Bill Scott, Chief of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)
David Lazar, Assistant Chief of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)
Carla Short, Director of Public Works (DPW)
Jonathan Vaing, Acting Superintendent Street Environmental Services (DPW)
Mary Ellen Carroll, Director of the Department of Emergency Management (DEM)
Sam Dodge, Director of Street Response Coordination (DEM)
Mark Mazza, Street Response Coordination Team Manager (DEM)
Phil Ginsberg, Parks & Recreation (REC)
Christopher Hiralez, Head Park Ranger (REC)
Barry Zevin, MXM Health Resource Center, Street Medicine, & Shelter Health (DPH)
Acting Chief, Chief of the San Francisco Fire Department (FIR)
Shireen McSpadden, Director of the Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing

As the City conducts encampment resolutions, we want to emphasize the importance of making sure that items essential to an individual's well-being are not lost, impounded or discarded. Loss of these items can make it harder for them to exit homelessness and worsen the problem we are seeking to address. Examples of essential items include:

Vital Records

- Identification – including driver's license, passport, and other government issued id
- Social Security card and Social Security issued income verification letters
- Birth Certificate

Lost identification and vital records can take several months to replace and are often required for people to obtain housing and employment. Their loss can cause significant delays in someone's ability to exit homelessness.

Items Necessary for Employment

- Work uniforms or other work clothing and shoes
- Work tools including for trades (e.g. wrenches, sound equipment, food delivery totes)
- Social Security card

People who have recently become homeless for the first time are more likely to become chronically homeless if they lose their job and source of income.

Items of Medical Necessity

- Prescription & over-the-counter medications including those used for mental health, substance use disorder, cardiac, diabetic, allergy and other medical health
- Wheelchairs, walkers, canes, compression socks, clean bandages

Many people rely on anti-psychotic and bipolar medications to help moderate their thoughts and behavior. Schizophrenia affects approximately 1% of the population, but it is estimated to affect approximately 20% of the homeless population.

Survival Gear

- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Other items to stay warm and dry overnight

The ideal temperature for sleep is 65° to 68°. Temperatures above 75° and below 54° can disrupt sleep. Lack of sleep can cause and/or exacerbate physical and mental health issues, and make it harder for an individual to exit homelessness. Proper sleep requires protection from wind, rain, dampness, sunburn, heat & particularly overnight cold temperatures.

Food & Water

It is critical for health to be able to retain:

- Food
- Water

In San Francisco, there are not many accessible public bathrooms that are open 24 x 7 nor are there adequate public sources for clean drinking water.

We appreciate your efforts to help reduce homelessness in San Francisco. Loss of these essential items can create setbacks that undo the progress we are all hoping to make in ending homelessness in San Francisco.