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News Release

For Immediate Release

City provides update on homeless camp issue

The City of Springfield is providing clarification following a routine Police call last week over concerns in an area of the City known as West Meadows. Police discovered a homeless camp set up on City-owned property that was clearly marked "No Trespassing" and "No Dumping" and was fenced off. Two people there were issued citations for trespassing, were given time to gather their items, and were given information on warming shelters and resources. They left cooperatively. The City's Public Works team cleaned up the remaining trash left behind after the men left with their personal belongings.

"There was a lot of incorrect information spread about this issue," said City Manager Greg Burris. "The Springfield Police Department and Public Works responded appropriately to this situation. We have listened, however, to the feedback from citizens reacting to this particular issue, and have standardized how we will respond in the future."

An [updated protocol](#) (pdf) incorporates feedback from citizens shared with the City through social media and traditional channels. It standardizes the amount of time trespassers will be given to vacate property to at least 24 hours, and creates a new system for communicating the needed action to those interested in helping those who are displaced.

The protocol specifically calls for agencies and advocates who provide services to the homeless to be contacted once an order to vacate has been given. This will give them an opportunity to work with the homeless campers in situations where they must be removed from either public property or private property (if the landowner makes a request).

"Some homeless advocates have indicated they would have helped these two men move if they would have known of the need for them to move," said Cora Scott, Director of Public Information & Civic Engagement.

"This updated protocol allows for that happen in the future and ensures that those needing to move will have at least 24 hours to do so. We have an amazing network of people working in our community to alleviate the suffering of the poor and homeless. We want to give them the opportunity to do the fine work they do."

If the Springfield Police Department feels an after-move clean-up will be necessary for a public site, they will notify the City of Springfield Public Works Department of the location of the camp and confirm a 24-hour notice has been issued to the campers. The Public Works Department will schedule a clean-up of the location after the 24-hour notice has expired. This time gap will ensure homeless campers have sufficient time to move and/or retrieve any desired items.



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will remain the responsibility of the property owner.

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