

Illegal Campsites

SPOKANE, Wash. - The City of Spokane hopes a pilot program established can help speed up the cleanup of illegal camps showing up throughout the city.

It's a team approach, which includes Spokane Police Neighborhood Resource officers, city code enforcement and the city litter crew. Citizens who report illegal camps have their calls routed through the city's 311 center, then the team evaluates the reports and dispatches resources.

The approach has speeded up the clean-up process so far. The camps are cleaned up in an average of four days, down from 13 days before the program launched.

The city says during the month of May, they were getting between seven and 10 reports a day about illegal camps. The team responded to 169 of them. Around 70 people were cited for illegal camping, then connected to city services through Community Court. Social workers also work with the individuals found camping illegally on city property.

The team evaluates a number of factors, then decides what resources to employ. If shelter space is available and those living at the camps are present, cleanup begins immediately. If the camp is vacant, the team posts a 48-hour notice of intent, then cleans the camp when the notice has expired. If a camp is on private property, the team reaches out to the property owner to get permission to come on the property and clean up the camp.



If you encounter an illegal campsite -

Do not approach or investigate:

Campsites are someone's personal living space.

Do not approach or investigate:

They may be occupied by someone who does not want you in their personal living space.

Do not approach or investigate:

They may be booby trapped. This year a cleanup worker stepped on a hidden spike strip.

Do not approach or investigate:

There is probably human waste somewhere within the campsite area.

Do not approach or investigate:

There may be hazardous substances such as needles, ammunition, or solvents.

Do this:

Take note of the location so it can be reported to the City for cleanup response.