

# Tips for Avoiding Problems with the Homeless



#communityinvolved

Talk to the Charleston Police Department Community Services Division, Sgt. P. Perdue, about any problems with homeless people.

**The following tips will help you avoid problems with homeless people.**

- Use signage that is at least 18 by 24 inches in size, have a font visible from the nearest public street, not be accessible to vandals and be posted at the entrances - spaced evenly on the boundaries of the property.
- Use caution in dealing with homeless. Do not offer food or money. It may encourage panhandling. If you are inclined to help the homeless, it is better to contribute to local charities, missions, food banks or social service organizations that assist the needy.
- Do not permit anyone to camp or loiter on your property.
- Do not allow anyone to store shopping carts, bedding or other personal belongings on your property.
- Restrict access to sidewalk overhangs, alcoves, or other areas protected from inclement weather.
- Lock or remove handles from water spigots.
- Keep trash dumpsters locked when not being filled or emptied.
- Secure outside storage sheds or containers.
- Lock or turn off exterior power outlets.
- Lock gates after hours.
- Install motion-activated exterior lighting after hours.
- Trim landscaping to eliminate hiding places.
- Canopies of mature trees should be maintained at least 8 feet above the ground.
- Bushes should be trimmed to less than 3 feet except where privacy or environmental noise mitigation is a primary concern, or where higher plants would not block any views/ lighting/camera coverage or provide hiding places.
- Keep property free of trash, litter, junk, etc.
- Use graffiti-resistant paint or anti-graffiti coatings on the sides of the building and any other design features that could be vandalized.

- Additional protection can be obtained by planting vines and bushes along the sides of the buildings. They help keep vandals away from the walls and cover areas that might otherwise be vandalized.
- Have plants at sidewalk level. If raised planter boxes are used, the sides should be at least 4 feet high or their tops should be uncomfortable for seating. By making them very narrow and allowing plants to grow over them, it will make them less desirable.
- Install surveillance cameras to cover public areas. Have security personnel monitor these cameras and ask persons engaged in prohibited conduct to leave the property. Security personnel should also patrol the property at random times.
- If security personnel are not available or if it is not practical to monitor the cameras all the time, install video analytics or intelligent video software in your camera system. It will alert you when something suspicious occurs. Lights could be turned on at night when motion is detected, and audio announcements could warn trespassers that the police would be called if they do not leave the property immediately.
- If signs stating that security or surveillance cameras are installed are posted, and the cameras are not monitored all the time, the warning should also include that caveat. This is important in keeping people from having a false sense of security and expecting help in the event they are attacked.

**To check out more information about the Charleston Police Department you can visit us at:**

**[www.charlestonwvpolice.org](http://www.charlestonwvpolice.org)**

**Or**

**Facebook: Charleston Police Department Community Services Division**

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## Charleston Police Contact Numbers

- Emergencies-911
- Non-Emergency-(304) 348-8111
- Records Division-(304) 348-6400
- Community Services Division-(304) 348-6470 (Speeding, abandoned vehicles, animal control problems, child safety seats)
- Special Enforcement Unit-(304) 348-0530
- Metro Drug Unit-(304) 348-6814
- Criminal Investigation Division-(304) 348-6480
- Charleston Municipal Court-(304) 348-8079
- Charleston Parking System-(304) 348-8158
- Chief of Police-(304) 348-6460
- Warrants Division-(304) 348-6402

For additional information about the city, you can access the City of Charleston, WV Web page at [www.cityofcharleston.org](http://www.cityofcharleston.org)

## **Social Services**

### **Addiction/Counseling/Mental Health/Transitional Living**

Prestera 304-341-0511

**Employment** Goodwill Industries 304-346-0811

**Food/Nutrition/Mail** Covenant House 304-344-8053

**Shelter (Males)** Roark-Sullivan Lifeway Center 304-340-3616

Union Mission Crossroads 304-343-4352

### **Shelter (Females/Families)**

Sojourners 304-340-3562