

## Downtown Bozeman Resource Toolkit on Homelessness

This toolkit aims to offer basic information for businesses and property owners experiencing matters with individuals who may be experiencing homelessness. The toolkit will be updated as new resources or information become available.

Please remember that homelessness is not illegal. Individuals experiencing homelessness are people—sons, mothers, daughters, fathers—and they live in our community.

Treat them with respect, dignity, and empathy. Most importantly, be kind. Kindness is a rare occurrence for those who are experiencing homelessness. Often a random act of kindness is the only sharing of humanity they experience throughout the day.

### Disruptive or Illegal Behavior

---

If you witness disruptive, illegal, or concerning behaviors please call the appropriate number below to report the situation immediately. Do not wait until later. Requesting a timely response is the only way assistance can be made. If someone is being disruptive in your business, ask them to leave and try to deescalate the situation if you are comfortable doing so.

Here is an approach you can try if you are comfortable doing so.

- Odds are, this will not be a one-off interaction, so it's good to establish a friendly relationship. Introduce yourself. Ask for the person's name.
- Politely ask them to leave using sincere empathetic language that deflects the request from yourself to a third party (e.g. the property owner asks them to leave, even if that person is you). This reduces the power-dynamic and will help in future interactions.
- Let them know where they can be, as opposed to only where they cannot be.
- If they are not cooperative, tell them you are going to call the police, but would rather not. Avoid confrontation and keep a safe distance if you feel threatened in any way.

### Behaviors or observations when 406-582-2000 (non-emergency police dispatch) should be called:

- Littering- If you witnessed it
- Public urinating/defecating
- Public drinking or display of open alcoholic beverages.
- Mental or physical health issue (welfare check)
- Any sort of behavior that makes a person uncomfortable.
- Person lying or sitting down in the middle of the sidewalk, so people can't pass easily.
- Person lying or sitting in the entrance or exit, so you can't enter easily.

### Behaviors or observations when 911 should be called:

- Criminal Trespass-Enter or remain after asked to leave
- Criminal Mischief-Damaging or destroying property of another
- Disorderly Conduct- Disturb the peace by challenging to fight, fighting, using threatening or abusive language, actively not letting a person pass, or actively blocking the way in or out of a business
- Aggression toward somebody
- Assault
- Exposing oneself

**Behaviors or observations when not to call either number. These are not illegal or disruptive and the police cannot intervene:**

- Person sitting or lying on a bench or sidewalk
- Panhandling
- Dirty or bad smelling

**Best Practices for Businesses and Buildings**

---

- Install motion-activated exterior lighting for after hours
- Lock or turn off exterior power outlets
- Provide personal protection for business staff (air horn, audio alarm, etc)

**Helpful Community Resources**

---

Become familiar with local service providers who can provide a meal, shower, or other needed assistance so you can point people in the right direction. Attached is a comprehensive list (and map) of Bozeman’s community resources for people in need of help.

**Be a Positive Part of the Solution**

---

- Get to know the people living in the area and treat them with respect like any other neighbor. Avoid perpetuating stereotypes, stigma, and myths.
- Encourage homeless individuals to utilize public services for appropriate aid they are seeking or need.
- Donate time, money, or materials to one of the many organizations in the community helping homeless individuals.

**This toolkit was prepared in conjunction by the** Downtown Bozeman Partnership, the Bozeman Police Department, and the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC).

