



City of Phoenix
OFFICE OF HOMELESS SOLUTIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	EFFECTIVE DATE January 1, 2023
SUBJECT IDENTIFICATION AND STORAGE OF PROPERTY BELONGING TO UNSHELTERED INDIVIDUALS	DRAFT DATE December 22, 2022

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to communicate the administrative procedure implemented by City of Phoenix Office of Homeless Solutions (OHS) staff regarding the management, assessment, documentation, removal, and storage of property that is reasonably believed to be owned by people experiencing homelessness.

II. FRAMEWORK

These guidelines will utilize the existing framework of the PHX C.A.R.E.S (Phoenix Community Action Response Engagement Services) process. The PHX C.A.R.E.S. process is a coordinated response for neighborhoods and individuals experiencing homelessness — offering education, resources, and encampment cleanups. PHX C.A.R.E.S. utilizes the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database to manage its response to relevant community requests. Further information about PHX C.A.R.E.S. can be found on its website at: <https://www.phoenix.gov/phxcares>

III. PROCEDURE

This procedure will be followed by OHS staff to manage the assessment, documentation, and possible disposal or storage for property reasonably assumed to be owned by individuals experiencing homelessness.

A. ASSESSMENT

An OHS staff member receives and reviews a daily list of PHX C.A.R.E.S. cases which are linked to a specific geographic site. Staff visits each site to assess and designate the site as one of the following:

- a. Active Encampment. An Active Encampment is a site where unsheltered individuals and their property are present.
- b. Unattended Encampment. An Unattended Encampment is a site where property reasonably believed to belong to an unsheltered individual is located, but individuals are not present. When evaluating whether a site is an Unattended Encampment, OHS staff will consider whether tents, lean-tos, bedding, cooking supplies, organized or stored property, or other indications of human occupation are present.

- c. Site Limited to Garbage. A site is limited to Garbage if it contains only Garbage according to the “Is It Garbage?” flowchart and checklist (Appendix 1) and/or unattended empty shopping carts.

B. MANAGEMENT AND REMOVAL

ACTIVE ENCAMPMENT WITH INDIVIDUALS PRESENT

Once designated as an Active Encampment, OHS staff will undertake the following steps:

- a. Call a PHX C.A.R.E.S. outreach provider to visit the site and provide appropriate outreach services to the occupants of the encampment.
- b. If individuals accept services and choose to leave site, OHS staff will instruct individuals to take all property they want to keep with them.
- c. OHS staff must communicate that items the individual chooses to leave behind will be considered Garbage and thrown away. OHS staff must give the individual a reasonable opportunity to collect and transport property and OHS staff must notify the individual if they are leaving behind Valuable Property (see “Is It Garbage?” flowchart, note 3 (Appendix 1)) and make sure the individual does not wish to collect the item.
- d. OHS Staff will coordinate with the appropriate clean-up team to dispose of Garbage that remains at the site.
- e. If individuals do not accept services and instead choose to remain at site, OHS staff may identify Garbage that can be cleaned up immediately in accordance with subsection (e), above. OHS staff will continue to engage with individuals at the site to offer services.
- f. Any photographs, descriptions, actions, and interactions shall be documented in CRM.

UNATTENDED ENCAMPMENT WITH NO INDIVIDUALS PRESENT

Once designated as an Unattended Encampment, OHS staff will undertake the following steps:

- a. Determine whether items present are Garbage or Not Garbage according to the “Is It Garbage?” flowchart (Appendix 1).
- b. When items are determined to be Not Garbage, OHS staff will undertake the following steps:
 - i. Stake/tag the property with a completed Unattended Property Notice (Appendix 2). OHS staff will post the Unattended Property Notice (Appendix 2) at the site.
 - ii. After 24 hours, OHS staff will return to the site. If the property remains, OHS staff will determine whether property is “Storable” or “Unstorable.”
 - Property is “Unstorable” if it cannot be safely stored indoors because it is flammable, explosive, toxic, corrosive, or would otherwise present an unreasonable risk to health or property if stored indoors. Examples include propane tanks, fuel cans, combustion engines, and batteries.
 - Property is “Storable” unless it is Unstorable.

- iii. If Storable Property is present, OHS staff will:
 - Take pictures of Storable Property to document contents and location;
 - Bag all storable property;
 - Stake/post a Property Storage Notice (Appendix 3) at the site; and
 - Store property as provided in Section D.
- iv. If Unstorable Property is present, OHS staff will arrange for safe disposal of the Unstorable Property.
- v. Any photographs, descriptions, actions, and interactions shall be documented in CRM.
- c. When items are determined to be Garbage, OHS staff will coordinate with the appropriate clean-up team to dispose of Garbage at the site.
- d. For shopping carts, OHS staff will undertake the following steps:
 - i. If the shopping cart is empty and unattended, report the shopping cart as ready for pick-up to the City's shopping cart contractor in CRM. OHS staff may move the shopping cart off of a street, sidewalk, pathway, or other area where it presents a safety hazard to nearby safe area.
 - ii. If shopping cart is not empty, OHS staff will:
 - Stake/post an Unattended Property Notice (Appendix 2) with respect to the contents of the shopping cart. OHS staff will post the Unattended Property Notice either on the property itself or in a highly visible location near the property. OHS staff may move the shopping cart off of a street, sidewalk, pathway, or other area where it presents a safety hazard to nearby safe area.
 - After 24 hours, OHS staff will return to the site. If the property remains, OHS staff will determine whether the contents of the shopping cart are "Storable" or "Unstorable."
 - Property is "Unstorable" if it cannot be safely stored indoors because it is flammable, explosive, toxic, corrosive, or would otherwise present an unreasonable risk to health or property if stored indoors. Examples include propane tanks, fuel cans, combustion engines, and batteries.
 - Property is "Storable" unless it is Unstorable.
 - If Storable Property is present, OHS staff will:
 - Take pictures of Storable Property to document contents and location;
 - Bag all storable property;
 - Stake/post a Property Storage Notice (Appendix 3) at the site; and
 - Store property as provided in Section D.
 - If Unstorable Property is present, OHS staff will arrange for safe disposal of the Unstorable Property.
 - Report the shopping cart as ready for pick-up to the City's shopping cart contractor in CRM.

- iii. Any services, photographs, descriptions, actions, and interactions shall be documented in CRM.

SITE LIMITED TO GARBAGE

If a site only contains Garbage, OHS staff will coordinate with the appropriate clean-up team to dispose of Garbage at the site.

C. DOCUMENTATION OF SITE VISITS

For each site visited, OHS staff will document the following information in CRM as applicable:

- a. Geographic location
- b. Date and time Notices are posted
- c. Interactions with individuals at sites (when available):
 - i. Services offered
 - ii. Claims of ownership of property
 - iii. Disclaimers of ownership, such as statements that an individual wants an item thrown away
- d. Number assigned to any property stored
- e. Photographs of any:
 - i. Notices left at the site
 - ii. Items stored

D. STORAGE & RETRIEVAL

OHS will maintain storage facilities at geographically dispersed sites within the City of Phoenix (Storage Site). When an individual requests return of their property, OHS staff will access the unit(s) at Storage Site to store property and to collect claimed property, as follows:

- a. OHS staff will deliver Storable Property to the Storage Site designated for the area where the property was found.
- b. If an owner claims property within 45 days, OHS staff will arrange a time and place to deliver the claimed property to the owner.
 - i. If the owner appears and takes possession of the property, OHS staff will document the time, date, and location the property was returned and the identity of the owner, if known.
 - ii. If the owner does not appear to retrieve the property at the time, date and location designated, OHS staff will continue to store property for the duration of the initial 45-day storage period.
- c. If no one claims property for 45 calendar days after the date it was stored, OHS staff will dispose of the property, except as provided in subsection (d), below.
- d. Identification cards, driver's licenses, medical insurance cards, and other difficult to replace documentation will be retained and stored for one (1) year; thereafter, these items will be securely disposed of.