

# Salem News You Don't Get in *The Salem News*

32 incidents involving homeless individuals in six days  
April 1-6, 2025

Welcome to another installment of *Salem News You Don't Get in "The Salem News."* This information comes directly from the Salem Police Department, obtained under the state's right-to-know law. We also have a couple of updates, **including a double murder**, which *is* in the news.

The point of this reporting is to understand the scope and depth of incidents taking place in our city by unhoused individuals. We know that not all homeless people are criminals, but those who are breaking the law are lowering the quality of life and imperiling the safety of all Salem residents. Alcohol, drugs, or mental illness—or a combination—are often involved.

Looking at one week's incidents gives us a sense of what citizens and our city's services, specifically the Salem Police Department and the Fire Department, are dealing with. Most incidents take place downtown. This month, there was even an incident at City Hall.

You may wish to compare this month's figures to those from the first seven days of March. The March 2025 report is here:

<https://gesna-salem.com/onoh-news>

Although there was one fewer incident this month, the figures are for six days rather than seven.

## Statistics for April 1-6, 2025

### • 16 Undesirable/Unwanted Guests

These are folks who were loitering on the property of a homeowner, renter, or business. The police are called when the person is requested to move along but refuses to do so. Loitering took place throughout the Downtown area, including numerous calls from Witch City Mall, plus Finz restaurant, Broad Street Cemetery, Eastern Bank, Derby Street, Lafayette Street, and the aforementioned City Hall.

### • 7 Medical Aid requests

In this category you'll find everything from overdoses to the need for a bandaid. We don't know how serious the incidents were, or whether a police cruiser or EMT wagon responded. However, we do know that our tax dollars pay for every response.

### • 2 Wellness checks

This is typically a call made by a concerned citizen or neighbor. Police responded to calls on Salem Common and the area of the former Flatbread Pizza restaurant on Derby Street.

### • One each of these

- **Bike/pedestrian encounter** at the Salem train station
- **Disturbance** at the Sunoco Station on Canal Street
- **Drunk individual** at the Lifebridge shelter
- **Shoplifting** at Walgreens on New Derby Street
- **Trespassing** at Speedway on New Derby Street
- **Noise** at an unnamed private home on Grove Street
- **Transportation of a prisoner**, the details of which were not disclosed

Lifebridge assumes no responsibility for its clients when they are not on premises, leaving the rest of us to deal with the problems they generate. Moreover, although not all incidents were committed by residents of Lifebridge, the fact that Salem has become known as a haven for unhoused individuals means that more of these kinds of offenses will continue to take place as ever more unhoused people take up residence in Salem's parks, woods, and elsewhere. As we head into warmer weather, we would not be surprised to see more. The SPD

does its best, especially the Community Impact Unit, which has extended concern and kindness to the city's unhoused population.

## Update

While the Case Incident Report provided by the Salem Police Department police provides an itemized overview, as you have read here, anecdotal reports by Salem citizens expand the scope of the problem. Here's an example of the kind of call referred to the SPD. It was posted on April 23 to the city's *SeeClickFix* platform:

"Two homeless individuals have decided to set up camp at the Essex Street and Derby Street walkway. I'm sympathetic to their need for safe locations to sleep, [however] should they wish to live on the streets, I don't think this is where we want them establishing their camp. This will lead to others and will soon be dealing with a South River situation once again."

The Department of Public Services referred this situation to the Community Impact Unit (CIU) of the Salem Police Department. The officers of the CIU are the ones who respond to and work most closely with the unhoused population of our city.

## More concerning: A double murder in Salem

On April 24, a homeless man living in Salem was charged with the killing of two men, who have since been identified as out-of-state members of the city's homeless community. This is one of the few new stories you will be able to read about in print or online or see on the TV news.

The online news site, Mass Live, published this report on April 24, opening with the headline "Suspect in Salem Double Murder Lived Near Crime Scene behind Walmart, police say."

The article continued: "A 30-year-old man accused of fatally stabbing two men whose bodies were found behind a Walmart in Salem — and who was arrested last week for breaking and entering — was held without bail in court on Thursday.

"Jay Blodgett was arraigned in Salem District Court on two counts of murder. He pleaded not guilty to the murder charges and was ordered held without bail."

The article goes on to say that the bodies were discovered by a man walking his dog on Wednesday, April 23. It states that a week prior to the discovery of the men's bodies, Blodgett had been arrested and charged with breaking and entering into a storage container near the Walmart with a hacksaw.

Drawing from court documents, the article further reports: "He had found the storage container while looking for somewhere to sleep, bought a hacksaw and cut off the locks, then brought a mattress in and started 'tossing things out' to make space . . . During Blodgett's arrest, police seized a green bicycle and all of the panhandling money Blodgett earned, which totaled over \$6700."

## Read the full story on Mass Live:

<https://www.masslive.com/news/2025/04/suspect-in-salem-double-murder-lived-near-crime-scene-behind-walmart-police-say.html>

— Joanne Mattera

## Additional reading

### • Statistics for March 1-7, 2025

[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/onoh%20news\\_incidents\\_mar2025.pdf](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/onoh%20news_incidents_mar2025.pdf)

### • Salem Police logged over 1600 "Homeless Incidents" in 2024

<https://gesna-salem.com/blog/f/salem-police-logged-over-1600-homeless-incidents-in-2023>

### • Senior accosted by two homeless men

[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/interview\\_camarda\\_july2024.pdf](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/interview_camarda_july2024.pdf)

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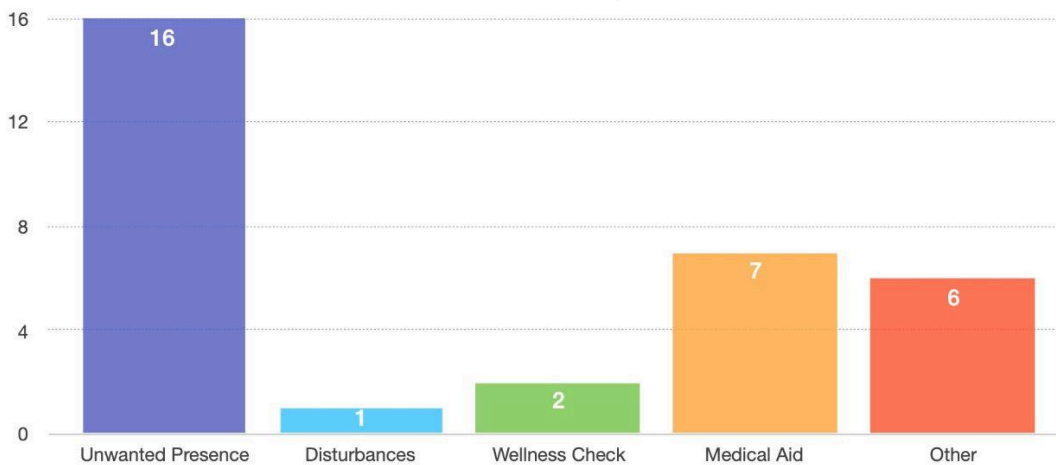


### Incidents: April 1-6, 2025

TYPE	INCIDENT
Unwanted Presence	16
Disturbances	1
Wellness Check	2
Medical Aid	7
Other	6
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>SOURCE: Salem Police Dept. Terms as used by SPD.</b>	
<b>Caveat: April report is only 6 days, not 7.</b>	
Infograph courtesy GESNA/ONOH.	

**OTHER INCIDENTS:** Included an Encounter, Drunk individual, Shoplifting, Trespassing, Noise, and Transportation of prisoner.

### INCIDENTS TOTAL 32: April 1-6, 2025



### PERCENTAGE OF 32 INCIDENTS: April 1-6, 2025

