

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

44 incidents involving homeless individuals in six days July 1-6, 2025

Welcome to another monthly installment of *Salem News You Don't Get in "The Salem News."* The information in this article comes directly from the Salem Police Department's Case Incident report, obtained under the state's right-to-know law. I have organized and annotated the information so that you can see the problems generated by our unhoused, and often transient, population. The point is not to demonize them but to be aware of how their actions impact our city.

With four months to look at—March, April, June, and July—we see that in the first week of each month there were, respectively, 33, 32, 41, and now 44 events in **one week** in which the police were called. There was no report for May, since I posted *An Inside Look at Lifebridge*. All reports are viewable online. (Links at end of article.)

Significant for July is that the case incidents reported are for **six days** rather than seven, yet the number is higher than in seven days of other months. It is impossible to say whether the holiday affected the numbers, but statistics indicate that the same issues are repeated in greater or lesser number. However, it is clear that incidents involving unhoused people—most of whom are not originally Salem residents—are concentrated Downtown. Riley Plaza, Charlotte Forten Park on Derby Street, and Lifebridge itself appear repeatedly as loci for police calls. If you live in the area, your quality of life is affected; if you don't, you are less likely to see these numbers as a problem. Yet this activity is taking place daily in our city center in full view of residents and visitors.

Statistics for July 1-6

.11 Requests for Medical Aid

Nine of the incidents requiring medical aid did not require an ambulance. Police could have been called for anything from a scrape or a fall to more serious physical issues. Several calls were made to Riley Plaza and Lifebridge, and one call each to Steve's Market, Old Town Hall, Speedway on Derby Street, Eastern Bank on Charter Street, the Fire Headquarters on Lafayette, as well as on streets Downtown.

Two incidents required ambulances: a mental health issue at Lifebridge, and a redacted situation on Washington Street

. 10 Incidents of Loitering

In the language of police reports, loitering is described as "Unwanted Guests." These are folks who hang out on the property of a homeowner, renter, or business. The police are called when a person is requested to move along but refuses, or when an owner/tenant feels unsafe asking loiterers to move. Loitering took place throughout Downtown, including Witch City Mall, the Post Office, near Steve's Market, and on Essex, Lafayette, Margin, North, and St. Peter Streets.

There were also two incidents of police being called to Lifebridge to remove unwanted guests.

. 8 Well-being Checks

Well-being checks are typically called in by neighbors or friends of the person, or by someone in an establishment where a person is found sleeping, high, or unresponsive. Police have responded to unhoused people at Salem Depot, Charlotte Forten Park, and on a number of Downtown streets: Bridge, Jefferson, Margin, Pope, and Washington Streets. The police Incident Report does not indicate the outcome of these well-being checks, only that police responded to calls.

. 4 Disturbances

Typically a Disturbance is a fight or loud argument. Two took place at Riley Plaza, one at Charlotte Forten Park, and one at a bar/restaurant Downtown.

Other incidents

- **1 Arrest Warrant** issued at Lafayette Park
- **1 Assault complaint** at Lifebridge
- **1 Censored** situation on Webb Street
- **1 Dispute** between individuals at Riley Plaza
- **1 Drunk** individual at Dunkin Donuts
- **1 Keep-the-Peace** intervention on Lafayette Street
- **1 Larceny** at Speedway on Derby Street
- **1 Lost & Found** on Margin Street. It is unclear if this situation relates to theft or misplacement
- Someone taken into **Protective Custody** at Riley Plaza
- **1 Suspicious item** at the intersection of Derby Street and Hawthorne Blvd.
- **1 Suspicious person** at the Broad Street Cemetery. (Neighbors in the area are on alert for drug use, sexual activity, and people sleeping in the cemetery overnight.)
- 1 incident of **Vandalism** at Riley Plaza

Additional reports by the Community Impact Unit and Directed Patrol officers

The **Community Impact Unit, or CIU**, is the dedicated police unit that reaches out to members of the homeless community in Salem. While specifics are not available to me for this report to you, I have been told by Chief Miller's office that the CIU report is a kind of daily log that tracks the activities and situations of many of the homeless individuals who are known to members of the CIU. It is a proactive initiative aimed at helping those who wish to be helped and assisting those who are unable to advocate for themselves.

In a similar vein, but working on foot or on bike, the officers on **Directed Patrol** keep an eye on the homeless community, looking to defuse potential situations and to call for help as needed. Their patrols take them to the various parks and locations where homeless people congregate.

In the first six days of July, the CIU issued three reports; Directed Patrol issued two. I have no access to these reports, so I cannot tell you how many additional incidents are noted, however I believe it is safe to say that the actions noted within would bring the number of incidents involving homeless individuals to well over 50 in the first six days of July.

Lifebridge assumes no responsibility for its clients when they are not on premises. Nor does it have its own security personnel. This leaves the surrounding neighborhoods—residents, businesses, and of course, the Salem police—to deal with problems created by homeless individuals.

Not all incidents noted here were committed by residents of Lifebridge, but that facility is the magnet that attracts ever more unhoused individuals. Of significant concern is that many, whether at Lifebridge or not, suffer from untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse. More of the kinds of offenses noted in this report—and others more serious—will continue to take place as ever more unhoused people take up residence here.

We want to see unhoused people helped, but this burden *must* be shared by more than one neighborhood and more than one city.

-- Joanne Mattera

Additional reading

. Statistics for June 1-7

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/onoh%20news_incidents_june2025.pdf

. Statistics for April 1-6

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/The%20News%20you%20dont%20get%20April%2024_2025.pdf

. Statistics for March 1-7

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/onoh%20news_incidents_mar2025.pdf

. An Inside Look at Lifebridge, May 2025

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/Inside%20Lifebridge-may2025.pdf>

. Senior citizen accosted

https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/79610166-405f-4f82-8cf8-098e13a7e299/interview_camarda_july2024.pdf

. Visit our website & GESNA Facebook page

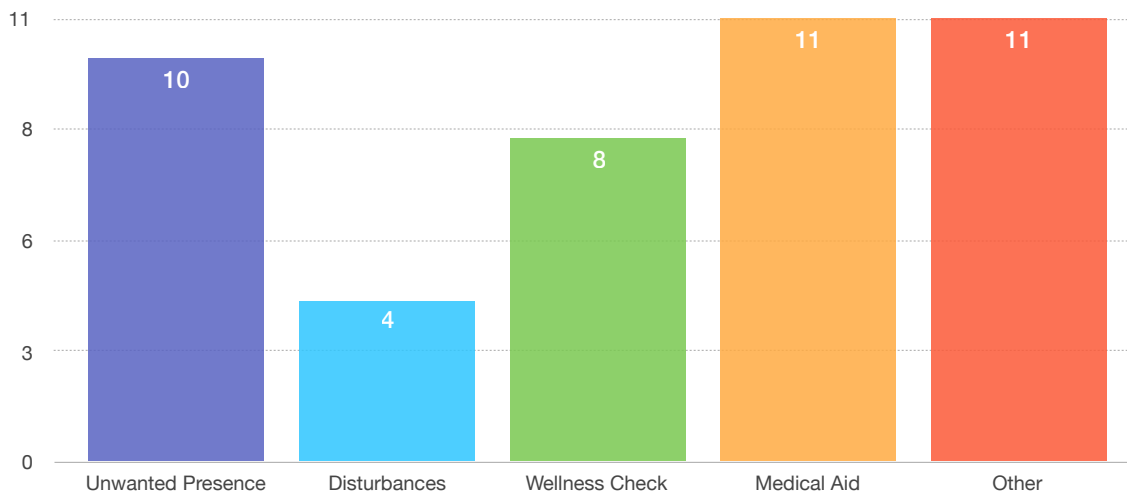
www.gesna-salem.com
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1296570384591885>

Incidents: July 1-6, 2025

TYPE	INCIDENT
Unwanted Presence	10
Disturbances	4
Wellness Check	8
Medical Aid	11
Other	11
TOTAL INCIDENTS	44
SOURCE: Salem Police Dept. Terms as used by SPD.	
Caveat: July report is only 6 days, not 7.	
Infograph courtesy GESNA/ONOH.	

OTHER INCIDENTS: Included an Arrest Warrant, Assault complaint, Censored situation, Dispute between individuals, Drunk individual, Keep-the-Peace intervention, Larceny, Lost & Found, Protective Custody, Suspicious item, Suspicious person, and Vandalism. Additional reports from CIU (3) and Directed Patrol (2) include unknown number of incidents.

INCIDENTS TOTAL 44: July 1-6, 2025



PERCENTAGE OF 44 INCIDENTS: July 1-6, 2025

