

Greenlots Initiative

Step-by-Step Homeless Encampment Cleanup & Community Restoration Plan

Purpose

This guide is designed to help communities safely, lawfully, and compassionately restore public spaces affected by homeless encampments while also connecting individuals with support services, shelter, food, sanitation, and outreach resources.

Phase 1: Preparation & Coordination

1. Assess the Site

Before entering the area:

- Identify:
 - Number of tents or structures
 - Hazardous materials
 - Trash accumulation
 - Biohazards (needles, human waste, spoiled food)
 - Fire damage or burn pits
 - Grocery carts or stolen property
 - Vulnerable individuals needing emergency help
 - Photograph the site for documentation purposes.
 - Determine:
 - Public property vs. private property
 - Immediate safety risks
 - Nearby schools, parks, businesses, or residences
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2. Coordinate With Authorities & Services

Contact appropriate organizations before cleanup begins:

- Public Works Department
 - Sanitation/Waste Management
 - Local outreach organizations
 - Mental health response teams
 - Law enforcement (only if necessary for safety)
 - Fire department if fire hazards exist
 - Environmental health agencies
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3. Post Advance Notices

Place visible notices throughout the area:

Include:

- Cleanup date and time
- Vacate instructions
- Resource hotline numbers
- Shelter and meal locations
- Storage or retrieval information (if applicable)

Suggested Notice Language

“This area is scheduled for cleanup and restoration. Please remove personal belongings by [DATE/TIME]. Outreach services and assistance resources are available. Unsafe or abandoned materials may be removed for public health and safety purposes.”

Phase 2: Outreach & Humanitarian Support

4. Conduct Outreach First

Approach individuals respectfully and calmly.

Offer:

- Water
- Hygiene kits
- Food assistance information
- Shelter referrals
- Transportation contacts
- Medical or mental health referrals

Avoid confrontation whenever possible.

5. Community Sign-Up Assistance

Provide:

- Printed assistance forms
- Pens and clipboards
- Contact request sheets

Allow individuals to voluntarily provide:

- Name
 - Phone number
 - Preferred shelter location
 - Immediate needs
 - Veteran status
 - Medical concerns
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Phase 3: Safety Procedures

6. Safety Equipment for Volunteers

All volunteers should wear:

- Heavy-duty gloves
- Closed-toe boots
- Reflective vests

- Masks if necessary
- Eye protection

Recommended supplies:

- Trash grabbers
 - Sharps containers
 - Biohazard bags
 - First aid kits
 - Water and sunscreen
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7. Hazard Identification

DO NOT directly handle:

- Needles
- Chemicals
- Weapons
- Human waste
- Unknown powders/substances

Instead:

- Mark the area
 - Contact trained hazardous waste personnel
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Phase 4: Cleanup Operations

8. Separate Waste Categories

General Trash

- Food containers
- Packaging
- Broken furniture
- Clothing debris

Recyclables

- Aluminum cans
- Cardboard
- Plastic bottles

Biohazards

- Needles
- Human waste
- Blood-contaminated materials

Salvageable Property

If local laws require:

- Store tagged belongings temporarily
 - Document collected items
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9. Remove Graffiti & Fire Hazards

Address:

- Burn pits
- Propane tanks
- Fire-damaged materials
- Graffiti
- Broken glass

Inspect for:

- Hidden embers
 - Fuel containers
 - Structural instability
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10. Grocery Cart Recovery

If carts are present:

- Identify store ownership

- Contact participating businesses
- Use cart recovery tags if available

Document:

- Number of carts recovered
 - Store names
 - Pickup dates
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Phase 5: Site Restoration

11. Sanitize the Area

After debris removal:

- Pressure wash surfaces if appropriate
 - Apply disinfectants
 - Remove sharp debris
 - Clear vegetation hazards
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12. Restore Community Use

Consider:

- Community gardens
- Lighting improvements
- Fencing repairs
- Volunteer maintenance schedules

The goal is long-term restoration, not temporary displacement.

Phase 6: Follow-Up & Prevention

13. Continued Outreach

Return periodically with:

- Outreach teams
 - Food assistance
 - Case management
 - Mental health services
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14. Monitor the Area

Create:

- Volunteer watch schedules
- Reporting systems
- Maintenance checklists

Track:

- Illegal dumping
 - Fire hazards
 - Encampment reformation
 - Sanitation concerns
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Volunteer Rules & Conduct

Always:

- Treat people respectfully
- De-escalate conflicts
- Work in teams
- Stay aware of surroundings
- Document concerns

Never:

- Use threats or intimidation
- Touch people's belongings unnecessarily
- Enter tents without permission or legal authority

- Handle hazardous materials without training
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Suggested Supplies Checklist

Cleanup Supplies

- Trash bags
- Rakes
- Shovels
- Brooms
- Gloves
- Buckets
- Disinfectant
- Sharps containers

Humanitarian Supplies

- Water
- Socks
- Hygiene kits
- Resource pamphlets
- Snacks
- Blankets

Administrative Supplies

- Clipboards
 - Pens
 - Sign-up sheets
 - Printed notices
 - Incident forms
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Greenlots Initiative

“Step By Step, We Can Make It If We Try.”

Community restoration works best when safety, sanitation, accountability, and compassion are addressed together.