

Responding to Encampments

An encampment means to pitch, create, use, or occupy space for the purposes of habitation. Evidence of encampments may include tents, tarps, vehicles, cots, beds, sleeping bags, and outdoor cooking facilities. Encampments are visible reminders that we have an affordable housing shortage and that many people have nowhere to go. This is an urgent issue and one that many leaders in the community are working together to solve.

Our goal is to make sure that everyone who is living in unsheltered areas is able to get into stable housing. **Here are answers to questions you may have about encampments.**



Who should I call if I see someone who appears to be living in their car, in a local park, on the streets, or in an encampment?

Report encampments to the Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention (OHPI) at (859) 258-3070, or email OHPI staff at jherron@lexingtonky.gov or mwebb@lexingtonky.gov. You can also call 311 (Lexington's centralized service and info center) and a representative will direct the report to OHPI staff.

Be prepared to share where the encampment is located and the approximate number of people observed camping. OHPI will determine the next best steps according to a standard operating process outlined below.



Who in Lexington is responsible for removing encampments once they are reported?

The Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention (OHPI) oversees the process of responding to and removing encampments. The OHPI will include relevant partners as needed, including Code Enforcement and Street Outreach Teams.



What is the process taken to address an encampment once it is reported?

When responding to reported encampments, Lexington officials follow a [standard operating procedure](#). While there are exemptions made to address immediate threats to public safety and health, our standard process gives Street Outreach teams adequate time to attempt to help people get access to emergency shelter, permanent housing, or substance use and mental health treatment.

This process allows us to better meet individuals' needs and facilitates getting people housed, which reduces the likelihood of camps returning.

Summary of Process:

For reported encampments, LFUCG agencies follow a removal process that facilitates timely responses to immediate public safety or health concerns and locations where there is a high probability of returning encampments. The process aims to ensure that households are relocated and connected to services to stop encampments from recurring.

Responding to Encampments

1

Identification

LFUCG divisions alert the Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention of identified encampments within 1 business day.

2

Assessment

The OHPI alerts street outreach teams and Code Enforcement within 1 business day to assess for evidence of an encampment.

3

Initial Notice

Code Enforcement or Environmental Services post "Notice of Pending Removal." Information on available street outreach services is provided.

4

Service Engagement

Street Outreach is given 5 business days to offer services and engage residents in a relocation and housing plan. Outreach occurs daily during this period.

5

Timeline Established

Daily outreach efforts continue with the aim to establish a written service or housing plan. Based on the written service or housing plan, a timeline for removal is established.

A written service plan is a plan of services needed for an individual to improve their situation with the goal to move to stable housing. Having this plan—and allowing for the time needed to create and implement this plan—is a vital step to getting individuals into housing. Getting people housed is the best way to keep encampments from returning.

6

Removal and Continued Outreach

A "Notice of Final Removal" is posted at least 72 hours in advance of the removal. Outreach efforts continue, which include the presence of Street Outreach teams on the date of scheduled removal. Street Outreach teams assist with relocating and storing belongings as needed.