

RENO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge this department's, governmental entity's and/or any of this department's employees' civil or criminal liability in any way. It is not to be construed as the creation of a particular standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to any complaint, demand for settlement, or any other form of grievance or litigation. Violations of this directive, if substantiated, can only form the basis for intra-departmental administrative sanctions.

Chief of Police: Michael Poehlman /s/		
Legal Advisor: Karen Fraley /s/		
Approving Deputy Chief:		
General Order No: S-160-05	Issued: January 3, 2006	Supersedes: 1/375.000
	Reissued:	Revised:
General Order Title: HOMELESS PERSONS/H.E.L.P. PROGRAM		

POLICY

The Reno Police Department is committed to the protection of human life and personal dignity. All persons will be treated with respect regardless of their individual situation. Taking negative action against someone for being homeless is improper conduct and not in accordance with department values. However, in all cases, unlawful conditions should be corrected.

To prevent homeless persons from becoming needlessly entangled in the criminal justice system and to ensure that qualifying individuals get proper referrals and assistance, the department has created the Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.). H.E.L.P. is a link between police personnel and available resources for homeless persons.

DEFINITION

Homeless Person – A homeless person is a person without a place of residence (temporary or permanent) who has no visible or physical means of support, *i.e.*, food, shelter, clothing, employment, etc.

PROCEDURES

Officers coming into contact with homeless persons will advise the person(s) of any and all violations that initiated the contact, and take whatever action necessary to resolve the incident.

1. Homeless persons who have no funds, but are able to care for themselves in other ways and are not intoxicated, disorderly, combative, or in need of medical treatment, qualify for referral to the H.E.L.P. program. If available, a H.E.L.P. officer will assist officers in making proper referrals
2. When possible, officers will make an effort to issue misdemeanor citations in lieu of physical arrest.

3. Homeless persons who are intoxicated, disorderly, combative, in need of medical treatment, or physically unable to care for themselves should be:
 - Taken into Civil Protective Custody and processed according to policy, if appropriate;
 - Arrested and processed according to department directives when a criminal violation has been committed; or
 - Transported to the appropriate hospital for medical treatment.

H.E.L.P. RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers in H.E.L.P. are assigned to the bike patrol and have varied duties including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Staffing the H.E.L.P. office, located inside the Greyhound Bus terminal (155 Stevenson Street) during operational hours. Office duties include:
 - Interviewing clients that have been referred to the H.E.L.P. office by local homeless resources and law enforcement agencies.
 - Determining what resources are appropriate for each individual, and making those referrals.
 - Assisting those who are not able to help themselves to be reunited with family members and support systems when available.
2. Patrol and monitor downtown parks and greenbelt areas for homeless individuals and camps.
3. When available, respond to calls for service when a homeless person is involved.
4. Handle citizen complaints regarding homeless issues.
5. Maintain close contact with local social service organizations to keep up to date on services offered.
6. Work with local organizations to:
 - Represent the interests of the department and the community.
 - Provide support for the court system and service agencies to get homeless persons into programs to help them overcome addictions, receive treatment for mental illness, etc.
 - Increase volunteer and community involvement and utilize these citizens within the downtown area outside of their facilities.
7. Train police officers and casino security personnel in appropriate social service referral.
8. Administer and manage the H.E.L.P. Transportation Program, and work with the River Patrol Officer.
9. Assist other officers, detectives, hospitals, and concerned relatives in locating people within

the homeless community.

10. Ensure that officers notify a supervisor when a homeless person is transported outside of the Department's geographical jurisdiction.