


POLICY 511.0	HOMELESS PERSONS	
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A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that personnel are sensitive to the needs and rights of the homeless population. To establish procedures helping guide officers during casual contacts and arrest situation contacts with homeless individuals, and reaffirm that being homeless is not a crime.

B. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department for all personnel to provide appropriate law enforcement services to the entire community while protecting the rights, dignity and personal property of the homeless by policy, rules, regulations and practices.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. Homeless Person – an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence or has a primary nighttime residency that is:
 - a. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations.
 - b. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized.
 - c. A private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

- d. The term “homeless person(s)” does not include any person imprisoned or otherwise detained following an Act of Congress or state law. 42 U.S.C. § 11301, et seq. (1994).
2. An officer may make reasonable inquiry to make this determination.

D. PROCEDURE

1. Casual Contact - At any time, and for any reason, police officers may approach a homeless person who has not been observed engaging in any criminal conduct, to advise him or her of shelters, services, or assistance which are currently available. The officer may also call for the assistance of Homeless Outreach personnel if available. The homeless person may or may not accept the advice or referral, or may even walk away from the area before the arrival of Outreach personnel. The rationale is to proactively provide referrals to the homeless (also known as “consumers” in the social services arena).
 - a. Police officers shall advise homeless person(s) needing assistance to call the Nationwide Homeless Helpline @ 954-563-HELP (4357) or 1-888-537-0211.

Families must be referred to the Homeless Helpline for placement.

- b. Police officers making contact with homeless person(s) requesting assistance should advise the homeless individual to meet with Homeless Outreach personnel and the Task Force for Ending Homelessness at their pick up points.

**Thursday @ 2:45 PM in the parking lot of St. Andrews Church, 1100 North Andrews Ave.

- c. Police officers making contact with homeless after hours that did not meet with the Outreach personnel for emergency overnight shelter may check with the Salvation Army by phone (954-712-2531) for any available vacancies. If the Salvation Army does have availability, the subject must be mentally stable and drug and alcohol free for 24 hours. If they do not have a bed available, the officer may transport the homeless person to either of the following locations. They must be escorted into the admitting desk to ensure they have beds available.

- (1). North Broward Outreach Center – 1700 Blount Road, Pompano Beach, FL.
- (2). South Broward Outreach Center – 2056 Scott St. Hollywood, FL.

- d. The Task Force Outreach Team van can always be found at these central feeding locations:
- (1). Sunday 1:00pm 5th Avenue Church of God, 211 NE 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale
 - (2). Monday 3:00pm St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 318 NW 6th Ave Fort Lauderdale
 - (3). Tuesday 3:00pm First Lutheran Church, 441 NE 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale
 - (4). Wednesday 3:00pm Hope Central 1100 North Andrews, Fort Lauderdale
 - (5). Thursday 3:00pm Hope Central 1100 North Andrews, Fort Lauderdale
 - (6). Friday 11:00am LifeNet4families, 1 NW 33rd Terrace, Lauderdale (Broward & 33rd)
2. Arrest Situations – Arrests of all persons including those defined as homeless shall comply with Florida Law, Municipal Ordinances and Department policies and procedures.
- a. If a police officer observes a homeless person(s) engaged in criminal activity, when practical and prudent to do so, an alternative to a physical arrest shall be used. Department Policy 501.2 - Alternatives to Arrest, lists the various alternatives available.
 - b. When encountering a homeless person who has committed a misdemeanor law violation and the continued freedom of the individual would not result in a breach of the peace or a more serious crime, police officers are encouraged to offer services when available in lieu of physical arrest. It must be recognized that such a referral is contingent on the voluntary agreement of the homeless person to accept such referral.
 - c. Officers using one of the alternative facilities listed in Department Policy 501.2 shall comply with the intake procedures of the chosen organization.
3. The Records Division Homeless Database – this database may be checked in order to assist in the decision to make a physical arrest or use a social service alternative. This data base can only be accessed by Homeless Outreach Officers through the Task Force for Ending Homelessness.

E. PERSONAL PROPERTY

The arresting officer shall take custody of the prisoner's property and will handle it in accordance with Department policy 502.1 (Intake Processing Procedures).

ATTACHMENT 1

COVENANT HOUSE PROCEDURE FOR ADMITTANCE BEFORE 4 PM, GIVE OUT THE HOMELESS HELPLINE CARD CALL 954-563-HELP (4357) OR 1-888-537-0211

1. An individual who comes into the Police Department lobby or calls by phone after 4 pm requesting shelter must first be checked for wants and warrants through FCIC/NCIC and BSO Local Warrants System. If the subject is 20 years of age or younger and has not been discharged by Covenant House previously, Covenant House should be utilized.
2. If the individual has been discharged previously, use admittance procedures for Helping People of America.
3. The front desk or dispatched officer will notify the Communications Center that transportation to Covenant House (733 Breakers Ave.) is needed and a patrol officer will be dispatched to transport. The individual will be informed to stand by until transportation can be arranged.

If a question arises while the Center is attempting to place an individual, the Communications Supervisor can contact Homeless Outreach personnel.

ATTACHMENT 2

SALVATION ARMY PROCEDURE FOR ADMITTANCE TO SHELTER BEFORE 4 PM, GIVE OUT HOMELESS HELPLINE CARD CALL 954-563-HELP (4357) OR 1-888-537-0211

1. An individual who comes into the Police Department lobby after 4 pm requesting a bed at the Salvation Army must first be checked for wants and warrants through FCIC/NCIC and BSO Local Warrants System.
2. If there are no warrants or notifications reference sexual predator/child molester, then the front desk or dispatched officer will call the Salvation Army at (954) 712-2531 and check if beds are available.
3. If there is an available bed, the front desk or dispatched officer will then give the Salvation Army personnel the subject's name/DOB and clothing description.
4. After ending the call with the personnel at Salvation Army, the front desk or dispatched officer will assist the subject to go across the street to the Salvation Army Social Service door (east end of building), and give their name to the Salvation Army's front desk clerk.
5. If a bed is available, the officer shall transport the person to the Salvation Army. They must be mentally stable and drug and alcohol free for 24 hours.
6. The open air beds are done on a lottery basis. The individual seeking a bed must contact the Salvation Army directly to be eligible for the drawing.