

# Trespassing Panhandling Unlawful Camping



#WeAreMonroeWA



Frequently Asked Questions for Monroe Businesses





# Frequently Asked Questions

For Monroe Business

## Your business is an essential part of our community.

Our City's aspirational vision statement underscores the importance of having a historic downtown and other business districts that are thriving and full of locally-owned businesses. We want to ensure that our residents and visitors can find everything they need with choices for work, dining, shopping, arts, and activities. It's important that we support gathering spaces, including businesses. It's critical that Monroe is a safe place for all where everyone feels at home and feels they belong.

Your business is essential in delivering on this vision. While you're there for us, we're here for you.

One way we are there for you is in responding to situations where people are living without a home, are in crisis, or are without jobs. We respond to these situations with our Police Department's community outreach team, our Human Services Department staff, and other partners.

With a variety of federal and state court cases and changes in state laws, cities have frequently had to change their response to these situations. The seemingly ever-changing landscape of do's and don'ts can prove frustrating to all involved to say the least. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is meant to provide you with the most up-to-date information on what you and the City can do to respond to these situations.

### **What is panhandling?**

Panhandling traditionally refers to asking (solicitation), begging, requesting, or pleading for money in-person and in a public place. State and federal law limit how a city can regulate panhandling.

### **How should I report aggressive panhandling?**

If you, your employee(s), or customer(s) feel threatened or harassed by a person panhandling or the person is blocking your movement on your business or private property, please call 9-1-1.

When reporting aggressive panhandling, provide as much detail as you can to the dispatch operator including the specific location (name and address of business), description of the aggressive panhandler (gender, clothing, behavior), and a call-back number to reach you.

### **What is the city's response when I report aggressive panhandling?**

Aggressive panhandling does not occur often in Monroe. However, there are common places where panhandlers are known to solicit. Our officers are trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation and use those skills when responding to a report of panhandling.

Upon initial contact, our approach is to make friendly contact with the panhandler and respectfully ask that they cease the activity. The responding officer(s) has the authority to issue a warning or charge the person with a misdemeanor. This rarely occurs as the panhandler is often cooperative.

### **What if my employees, customers, or I feel unsafe because someone is acting erratically in my business or on my property?**

Please call 9-1-1 or 9-8-8 to report someone who may be in crisis or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Manage the situation respectfully, but do not confront the person. Provide as much detail to the emergency dispatcher such as the description of the person, their behavior, and why you are concerned or fearful. Please handle the situation respectfully until the police arrive.

### **What is the process to trespass a person from my business or my property?**

Trespassing is broadly defined as entering or remaining unlawfully in or upon the premises of another when not licensed, invited, or otherwise legally privileged to do so.

The Monroe Police Department enforces trespassing in accordance with its municipal code (MMC 9.10.140) and State laws (RCW 9A.52). Should someone trespass on your business or your property, please report it to 9-1-1.

### **What is the city's response when I report a trespasser?**

Upon the initial report, the responding police officer(s) will make friendly contact with the person and will typically issue a written warning. The warning prohibits the person from returning to your property for one year without your permission. If you report the same person for a second time, the person could be cited with a misdemeanor offense. Arresting the individual rarely occurs. Our approach is to be friendly, informative, and helpful. Monroe police officers are trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation and use those skills when responding to a report of trespassing.

As a follow up, you can file a Trespass Letter of Consent with the Monroe Police Department that gives police officers permission to enforce trespassing laws on your behalf, even if you are not there. To download the form, go to the city's website at [MonroeWA.gov](http://MonroeWA.gov) and search Trespass Letter of Consent.

You may revoke the Trespass Letter of Consent by contacting the Monroe Police Department at [pdrecords@monroewa.gov](mailto:pdrecords@monroewa.gov).

### **What if someone is sleeping outside my business, or blocking the entrance or sidewalk?**

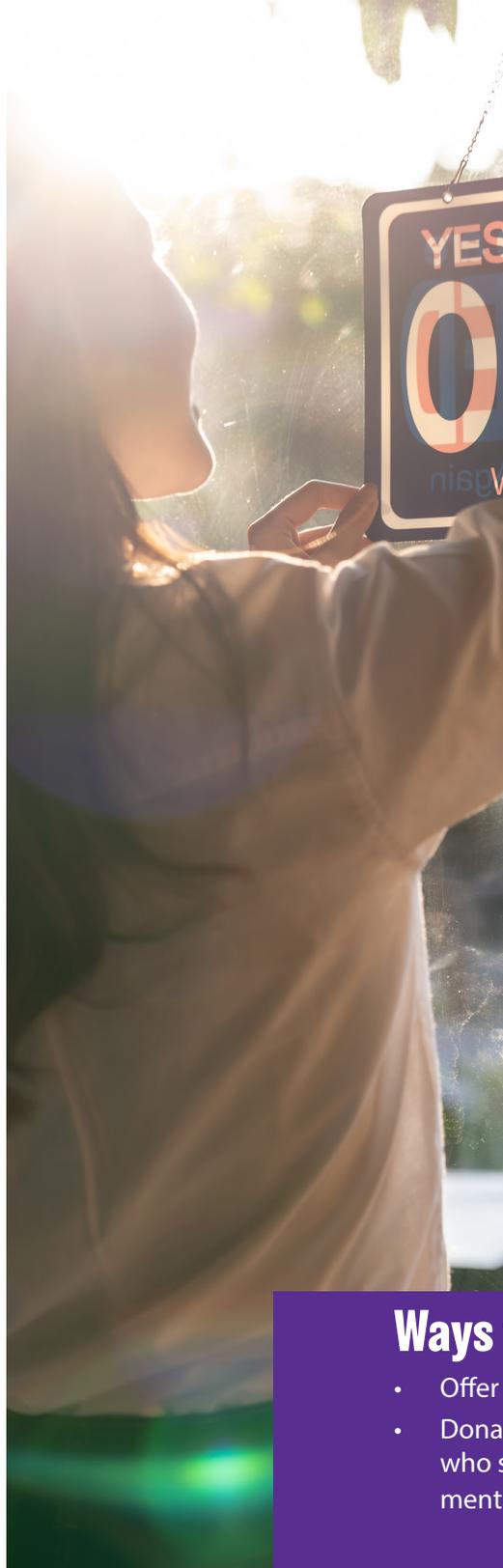
Please show kindness and compassion. Respectfully ask them to leave your business premises. Don't be confrontational but be firm. If the person becomes agitated, inform them that you will call 9-1-1. Leave the area and call for police assistance.

### **How do I report unlawful camping in a city park or other public space, like a sidewalk?**

If you see a tent or group of tents in a city park or public space such as a sidewalk, please call the Human Services Coordinator at 360-913-4817. The City's Community Outreach Team will be notified and respond.

### **What is the city's response when I report unlawful camping?**

Monroe Police and other agencies are aware of common areas in the city where unlawful camping occurs. Our Community Outreach Team makes regular contact with people who are unlawfully camping and provides resource information to assist them with housing, mental health, and other human service needs.



### **How can I help someone in need?**

It may feel like the "right thing to do" by giving money to people with "Help Me" signs. Offering cash provides only a very short-term intervention for one person who may or may not be homeless. Instead of giving money to a person, please consider donating your time or money to a local human services organization. A list of these can be found at [MonroeWA.gov](http://MonroeWA.gov) (Search: How to Help).

### **How is Monroe helping people in crisis and residents who are unhoused?**

Since 2014, the City of Monroe has developed new partnerships and tools to respond to residents who are in crisis or are unhoused. These tools are consistent with federal and state court decisions and changes in state laws and include arrest and potential incarceration. The following additional tools have been successful at reducing the likelihood that someone is rearrested or reincarcerated:

- Monroe's Community Outreach Team connects personally with people in need. (See back panel)
- Monroe Municipal Community Court provides social and human service support to individuals charged with low-level quality of life crimes.
- Community-based organizations help people find food, emergency shelter, drug treatment, and mental health counseling.
- Mobile Mental Health Program (Sky Valley Resource Center/Sultan) connects crisis care professionals with first responders who are assisting persons experiencing acute mental or behavioral crisis. This program can be reached and dispatched through the 9-8-8 National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.
- McKinney Vento Act Program helps children and youth whose families are experiencing loss of housing to enroll and succeed in school.
- EvergreenHealth Monroe Recovery Center's Scholarship Bed Program supports un- and under-insured Monroe residents who need substance abuse assistance.

## **Ways to help those in need:**

- Offer a care kit, food item, and/or water;
- Donate and/or volunteer with organizations who support people with housing and mental health needs.





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## Monroe Community Outreach Team

In a unique partnership, a city police officer, the city's Human Services program manager and a Snohomish County social worker proactively engage with people who experience chronic homelessness and connect them to resources, medical assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, and rides to appointments.

### **Monroe Police Chief Jeff Jolley**

(360) 863-4578 | JJolley@monroewa.gov

### **Officer Bradley Pettit**

(360) 794-6300 | BPettit@monroewa.gov

### **Rachel Adams, Human Services Coordinator**

(360) 913-4817 | RAdams@monroewa.gov

### **Elisa Delgado, Social Worker**

(425) 293-3808 | Elisa.Delgado@co.snohomish.wa.us

**For Officer Dispatch:**

**Call 9-1-1 for emergencies**

**Call (425) 407-3999 for Non-emergencies**