5-09/065.00 - Contact with Homeless Individuals

When contacting homeless individuals, Department personnel should take into consideration the possibility of mental illness and/or distress to maintain safety and compassion. Personnel should attempt to assist individuals experiencing homelessness through the referral process in lieu of arrest for non-violent, low level offenses when possible. The referral process includes contacting homeless outreach experts and service providers to obtain temporary housing, medical, mental health, or other applicable services. Department personnel shall also respect an individual's right to refuse assistance.

Department personnel shall not involuntarily move a homeless individual from a location where the person may lawfully stay, absent legal justification to do so, such as when there is a safety or security concern.

Community Partnerships Bureau's Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), is available to conduct homeless encampment checks when a homeless encampment or convergence exceeds the capabilities of station personnel.