

From: Simon, Flo J. <fsimon@cob.org>

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2021, 10:32:53 AM PDT

Subject: RE: Following up RE: Questions for you regarding CDC recommendations related to encampments

Ms. Jensen,

Thank you for your patience with us this week.

You had two questions in your email which relate back to a webpage on the COB website addressing illegal encampments. We reviewed the answer in the FAQ you mention as well as the interim CDC guidance from July 2021 found at this [link](#). The FAQ was answered based information known to us at the time (**2020**) and based on a variety of sources, including the CDC, Whatcom County Health Department, COB Legal and other stakeholders. An update of that FAQ answer is due for 2021 and will be accomplished in the near future.

As far as your second question about the efforts made to carry out the recommendations stated in the last paragraph of the CDC recommendations, those are not in the police department's purview and the Whatcom County Health Department, our local social service providers and other applicable departments with COB would be a better resource for that answer.

Thank you,

flo

Flo Simon

Chief

Bellingham Police Department

(360) 778-8604

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 9:44 AM
To: Simon, Flo J. <fsimon@cob.org>
Subject: Re: Following up RE: Questions for you regarding CDC recommendations related to encampments

Dear Chief Simon:

Thank you for keeping me updated regarding your response. I look forward to the information.

Sincerely,

Dena Jensen

Birch Bay, WA

On Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 09:17:00 AM PDT, Simon, Flo J.
<fsimon@cob.org> wrote:

Ms. Jensen,

I'm trying to track down some information for you to be as accurate as possible – please bear with me, I should have the information today.

Thank you,

Flo Simon

Chief

Bellingham Police Department

(360) 778-8604

My incoming and outgoing email messages are subject to public disclosure requirements per RCW 42.56

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 20, 2021 5:43 PM
To: Simon, Flo J. <fsimon@cob.org>
Subject: Following up RE: Questions for you regarding CDC recommendations related to encampments

Dear Chief Simon:

I am following up on my email below that I sent to you last week. I look forward to receiving a response from you in the near future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dena Jensen

Birch Bay, WA

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: fsimon@cob.org <fsimon@cob.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 12:31:25 PM PDT
Subject: Questions for you regarding CDC recommendations related to encampments

Dear Chief Simon:

I have a couple questions I would like to ask of you.

On the City of Bellingham's webpage which provides information on "Reporting and Cleaning Up Unauthorized Encampments" (<https://cob.org/services/safety/police-services/reporting/homeless-camp>), there is a question in the FAQs on that page that asks, "What camp cleanups are being conducted during the COVID-19 emergency?" The answer which is posted to that question states, in part:

"The City is currently following established procedures for reporting and monitoring camps during COVID-19, using guidance from the Governor's Office, state Attorney General and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to carefully evaluate which camps to clean up and taking action on fewer camps overall during the pandemic. This is consistent with CDC guidance to leave in place small encampments that display less serious health and safety risks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19."

My first question is in regard to the last sentence of that paragraph.

Can you please provide me with the source of CDC recommendations that states that it is "small encampments" that display less serious health and safety risks that are to be left in place?

I am asking this question because the qualifier of small encampments is not listed on the CDC's COVID-19 "Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness," under "Considerations for encampments," nor are any caveats that relate to the health and safety of the encampment listed, except the following recommendations:

"If an encampment is not able to provide sufficient space for each person, allow people to remain where they are but help decompress the encampment by linking those at [increased risk for severe illness](#) to individual rooms or safe shelter.

"Work together with other community organizations and offices to improve sanitation in encampments. Ensure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day.

"If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, assist with providing access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people. These facilities should be equipped with hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol)."

The last section in these recommendations seems to indicate that the CDC is acknowledging that encampments larger than ten people should remain in place along with any that are smaller, but that measures should be taken to help ensure hygiene and sanitation measures are accessible for encampments.

My second question is: what efforts are being made to carry out the recommendations listed above, especially the final one? I will check with the Whatcom County Health Department, as well, but would like to know what measures have been taken in relation to current encampments of which you are aware, or that have been recommended by your department.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dena Jensen

Birch Bay, WA