



# PROPOSED ORDINANCE: CAMPING PROHIBITED

Amendment / Addition to City Code

Councilman Dave Donelson

CSPD Lt. Ryan Tepley, Homeless Outreach Team

Emily Vandenberg, Prosecuting Attorney

**February 24, 2026**

Colorado Springs Police Department

# CURRENT PRACTICE



CSPD HOT/DART Team works to prevent unlawful camping through multiple avenues:

- Collaborating with Community Partners to Identify Areas of Need.
- Posting Unlawful Camps and Giving Warnings.
- Offering Outreach Resources.
- Coordinating Camp Clean-Ups.
- Issuing Citations.

# CURRENT PRACTICE



## CAMPING CITATIONS UNDER MULTIPLE SECTIONS:

CSPD officers investigating unlawful camping in the City:

- Depending upon the location of the violation, cite the violator into Municipal Court for:
  - Camping in Parks Prohibited, 9.9.404;
  - Camping on Public Property Prohibited, 9.9.110;
  - Camping Within Public Stream, 9.6.111; or
  - Trespass, 9.6.102.
- At some locations, a mere 300' separates which charge is cited. Examples: I-25 and Bijou area and I-25 and the MLK bypass area.
- Vehicle campers cannot be cited unless there is evidence of camping outside of the vehicle or a parking ticket can be issued.
- Some campers may be cited into El Paso County Combined Court if state-specific charges accompany camping activities.

# CURRENT VIOLATION INFORMATION



Current Numbers	2025	January 2026
Camp Cleanups Requested	1,692	219
Camps Posted	2,323	219
Warnings Given (FIRs)	657	6
Outreach Services Offered	1,024	80
Persons Engaged in SRC Programming from Contacts	90	Unknown
Outreach Services Rejected	646	48
Camping Restrictions Parks Summons Issued	131	5
Camping on Public Property Summons Issued	539	9
Stream Camping Summons Issued	293	16
Trespass (Camping Private Property) Summons Issued	736	35
Unlawful Fire Summons Issued	41	13
Misdemeanor / Felony Warrants Addressed	3,052	204
Vehicle Camps Contacted	138	3

These numbers represent totals for the 8 HOT Officers, HOT Sergeant, and 88 HOT SMEs across CSPD.

Warrant Breakdown for 2025:  
 Felony Warrants Cleared – 284  
 Other Felony Arrests – 67  
 Misdemeanor Warrants Cleared – 2,243  
 Other Misdemeanor Arrests – 458

# PROPOSED ORDINANCE



City Code	Summary
§ 9.6.110: Camping Prohibited	Amend existing municipal Camping on Public Prohibited ordinance to Camping Prohibited. All camping prohibitions (9.6.110, 9.6.111, and 9.9.404) will be within one City Code section, and this section will provide more robust definitions to better define camping activities.
§ 9.6.110(C)(3)	Creates new municipal law violation for camping within a vehicle on any public property after the person has received a warning and twenty-four (24) hours have elapsed since that warning.

# MAJOR CHANGES



- Consolidates all camping violations into one Code section
- Improves definitions
- Penalties become consistent for all camping violations
- Park Camping is absorbed into Camping on Public Property
- Adds Vehicle Camping
- Clarifies permission to camp is an affirmative defense to all camping violations.
- A violation of § 9.6.110, Camping Prohibited, may be punished by a jail sentence of no more than ten (10) days, a fine of no more than \$300, probation, or a combination of those penalties.

# ISSUING A CAMPING SUMMONS (WHAT HAPPENS ON SCENE)



- Probable Cause is developed by a HOT Officer or HOT SME to believe a person is camping in violation of City Code.
- Resources and assistance offered to the person.
- System check performed for documented prior warning (FIR).
  - If no prior warning is documented, then a warning is provided.
  - If a prior warning is listed, then a summons and complaint (ticket) is issued.
- Upon issuance of a ticket with a mandatory court date in Municipal Court, the person is released.
- The only time a person is taken into custody is (1) if they have outstanding warrants on other matters requiring arrest or (2) probable cause is developed to arrest for a felony level crime or misdemeanor domestic violence offense.
- Some outstanding warrants can be cleared on-scene by a person agreeing to appear for a new court date. In that case, a person is released as soon as they agree to appear.
  - Other warrants require officers to arrest the person and transport them to jail.
- Vehicles will not be towed automatically. In fact, towing is very rare.
- The majority of the time, we all walk away at the end of the contact.

# MUNICIPAL COURT PROCESS



- **Steps:**
  - Summons and Complaint Issued
  - First Appearance
  - Pretrial Conference
  - Motions Hearing
  - Trial
  - Sentencing
  - Appeal to District Court
- See process outline for more information about these steps.
- **Important Rights:**
  - Right to Counsel
  - Right to Discovery
  - Right to Bond Hearing
- A person may only go to jail after they have been found guilty at trial, voluntarily plead guilty to an offense, are held in contempt of court, or failed to appear for court.
- People are encouraged to read tickets carefully. Each Colorado Springs Municipal Court ticket contains important advisements. Questions to the court are encouraged.

# COUNCIL ACTIONS



- Approve the ordinance as presented
- Amend the proposed ordinance
- Decline to adopt the ordinance