

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Philip C. Hunsucker, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

DATE: October 27, 2025

SUBJECT: WORKSHOP re: Updating the County's Unauthorized Encampment Removal Policy

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Jefferson County Policy No. 02.10.23-01 is out of date and requires updating. The immediacy for this revised policy was brought about by the City of Port Townsend's announcement to close the encampment at Evans Vista on November 3, 2025. As a result, Jefferson County must take prudent steps to review its own encampment related policies and procedures to ensure any future encampment removals are well-planned and comply with current law.

ANALYSIS:

This revised policy does a few things, most notably:

- Adopts a Public Health framework;
- Updates the policy to comply with recent state and federal case precedent;
- Provides for designated personal property storage at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office;
- Provides for robust notice and record keeping; and,
- Provides for the designation and training of county personnel who have specific roles and responsibilities related to encampment work.

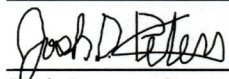
FISCAL IMPACT:

At this time, there is no immediate fiscal impact, except for additional internal coordination and staff training. However, there may need to be some additional costs in the future, which are unknown at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

For BoCC to consider the revised policy and provide any desired feedback and direction to staff. If BoCC wishes to adopt a revised policy, an adopting resolution is also provided.

REVIEWED BY:



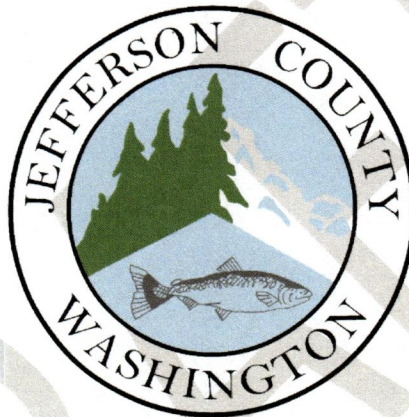
Josh Peters, County Administrator

10/24/2025

Date

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
WASHINGTON STATE**

**DRAFT
UNAUTHORIZED ENCAMPMENT REMOVAL POLICY**





DRAFT
JEFFERSON COUNTY
UNAUTHORIZED ENCAMPMENT REMOVAL POLICY

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1.0 Introduction and Purposes

- 1.1 In accordance with Jefferson County Code (JCC) [2.01.080\(2\)](#), the Jefferson County Administrator shall perform “the full range of managerial oversight functions over all county administrative operations, including financial management, planning, policy development, performance management, and prioritization of fiscal, human, and capital resources.”
- 1.2 The lack of affordable housing and other resources have resulted in increasing numbers of unsheltered individuals resorting to camping on public and county property in authorized and unauthorized areas. County officials must be able to enforce a common-sense policy to protect the health and safety of its residents and maintain county public spaces. When county officials lack appropriate tools, and encampments persist without monitoring and appropriate assessment, it may increase the likelihood of endangering the health and safety of those living in and alongside them. Jefferson County must balance the need to operate county public property for its intended purposes, as well as public health and safety, while respecting the personal property and the right to privacy of those who camp on public property. This Jefferson County Unauthorized Encampment Removal Policy (this Policy) attempts to create that balance, consistent with existing law.
- 1.3 Homelessness is not a crime. Persons will not be prosecuted for sleeping outside on county property, absent other circumstances, which constitute criminal law violations. Jefferson County shall not prohibit individuals from sleeping outside anywhere in the jurisdiction, which is not otherwise prohibited by the Jefferson County Code provisions¹, without offering any alternative shelter, which may be available. Jefferson County recognizes that is both inhumane and imposes additional hardships on the displaced individuals and limited social services safety network, which must face the costs and challenges of an increased unsheltered homeless population.
- 1.4 The County Administrator shall designate certain departments and county personnel to keep track of available shelter space. If no shelter space is available, the County Administrator may designate an area on publicly-owned property that temporarily may be used in lieu of a shelter. The temporary use of the area shall comport with the requirements of JCC [18.20.385](#).
- 1.5 The County Administrator shall ensure that a training program is developed for all departments, county personnel, and subcontractors who will be involved in unauthorized encampment removal. The County Administrator shall also ensure that forms that document the unauthorized encampment removal process shall be developed and used, as well as standardized forms for notice. The training program, forms, and notice forms shall be reviewed by the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.

¹ For example, chapter [12.25](#) JCC regulates County Parks. Nothing in this policy is meant to supersede county park regulations.



This policy prioritizes shelter, services, and ensures that people experiencing homelessness and their belongings are treated with respect.

- 1.6 The purpose of these rules is to establish uniform procedures for removal of unauthorized encampments on county-owned property. Only encampments expressly authorized through action of the county are exempt from these rules.

2.0 References and Authority

- 2.1 This Policy is adopted by the Jefferson Board of County Commissioners. It will remain in effect until revised or replaced, or is superseded by action of the Jefferson Board of County Commissioners, state, or federal law.
- 2.2 The county may issue additional regulations or guidelines necessary to aid in the implementation or enforcement of this Policy.
- 2.3 Nothing in this Policy is meant to replace or take precedence over other county code provisions. Where other county code provisions may be in conflict with this Policy, the Jefferson County Code provisions control.

3.0 Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

3.1 "Abandoned" or Abandonment

"Abandoned" or Abandonment" of an encampment or personal property within an encampment requires a finding by a county department director that based on an objectively reasonable belief property is no longer considered "owned" by an individual, as documented by county staff through verified oral or written statements of an individual relinquishing control of personal property or other means used to determine that the owner of the property has relinquished control of the personal property.

3.2 Abandon

"Abandon" for the purposes of this Policy means to terminate the use of a tent or structure by an affirmative act, such as changing to a new use; or to cease, terminate, or vacate a use or structure through nonaction.

3.3 Authorized or emergency Shelter(s)

"Authorized or emergency Shelter(s)" means temporary lodging and supportive services for unhoused individuals in licensed, registered, or permitted facilities run or operated by county, city, or other community-based programs or organizations.

3.4 Authorized encampment



“Authorized encampment” An area designated by the county on publicly-owned or private property that is being used as a temporary housing facility in lieu of a shelter consistent with the requirements of JCC [18.20.385](#) or other applicable Jefferson County Code provisions.

3.5 Camping

“Camping” means erecting a tent or shelter or arranging bedding or both or parking a trailer, RV, camper, or other vehicle for the purpose of, or in such a way as will permit, remaining overnight. As defined in JCC [12.25.020](#)(3).

3.6 County

“County” means Jefferson County, Washington, including its officers, employees, agents, or any contractors and sub-contractors. County owned property includes but is not limited to any real property owned by Jefferson County, as well as any right of way property maintained by Jefferson County, including but not limited to any public street, road, bike path, trail, or sidewalk.

3.7 Designated County Personnel (“DCP”)

“Designated County Personnel” (or “DCP”) means county employees designated by department directors and trained to undertake inspections, initiate and oversee removal of encampments and storage of personal property, and ensure compliance with this Policy and applicable laws by county personnel and any subcontractors or outreach personnel. DCP includes law enforcement personnel and county employees from the various departments participating in the encampment removal.

3.8 Encampment

“Encampment” means one or more tent, structure, or assembly of unauthorized camping equipment or personal property located on county-owned public property, which appears to a reasonable person is being used for camping or for the purposes of habitation. Encampments do not include sites that have been abandoned. See definition of abandon. Encampments may include vehicles and RVs, which may be operational or non-operational.²

3.9 Emphasis Area

“Emphasis Area” means an identifiable area where the county has removed an encampment and has designated an encampment-prohibited area by installing signage as provided in [Section 14](#).

3.10 Habitation

² Removal of Vehicle and Public Right-of-Way Nuisances are subject to the provisions in chapter [19.25](#) JCC.



“Habitation” means the appearance of currently residing in a location as evidenced by the presence of bedding materials, campfires, cooking materials, storage of clothing, or other personal property gathered together in such a manner that a reasonable person would believe that the site is being used for residential purposes.

3.11 Hazard

“Hazard” means a situation that presents a potential to cause damage, harm, or adverse health effects on something or someone, or any substance or material that is highly flammable, corrosive, toxic, or reactive.

3.12 Immediate hazard

“Immediate hazard” means an area that presents an imminent risk of serious injury or death, beyond that caused by increased exposure to the elements, as determined by a reasonable person. “Immediate hazards” include, but are not limited to danger from vehicle traffic because the encampment is on the shoulder of a street or highway or other areas exposed to moving vehicles; and natural hazard areas, including but not limited to landslide-prone areas and special flood hazard areas.

3.13 Obstruction

- (a) “Obstruction” means personal property, garbage, debris, or other objects related to an unauthorized encampment that substantially interfere with the pedestrian or transportation functions of public rights-of-way; or substantially interfere with other areas necessary for or essential to the intended use of a public property or facility.
- (b) To be classified as an “obstruction,” designated county personnel must document why any personal property, garbage, debris or other objects are classified as an obstruction, create a photo and journal log, and make bona fide and documented efforts to locate any person who may believe that the personal property belongs to, prior to removal.
- (c) Obstruction of the county’s public streets, roads, bike paths, trails, or sidewalks also means in a manner that impedes passage within the meaning of the American Disabilities Act.

3.14 Outreach

“Outreach” means information and education provided by an approved community provider with the competency and training to engage unsheltered individuals.

3.15 Personal property

“Personal property” means the belongings of an individual, as indicated by the person to whom the property belongs.



- (a) These items usually have apparent utility in their present condition and circumstances and are not hazardous, but also include items that are not hazardous that are kept in a manner that indicates an individual regards the item as personal property.
- (b) Examples of person property include, but are not limited to:
 - i. items of apparent value of \$50 or more; and,
 - ii. items of apparent personal value, including but not limited to personal identification and identity documents, personal papers and documents (such as photographs, albums, bank statements, and legal papers), tents, usable furniture, operational bicycles, scooters, strollers, radios, electronic equipment, eyeglasses, prescription medications and other medical equipment, books, jewelry, backpacks, containers, any item used by a disabled person for mobility, and any item that could be ordinarily found within a home.
- (c) Items that constitute a health and safety risk and will not be collected and stored include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Toxic sharps: needles, scissors, knives.
 - ii. Chemicals: bleach, paint, oils, etc.
 - iii. Items (including bedding and clothing) soiled by infectious materials, including human waste and bodily fluids.
 - iv. Moldy, mildewed items.
 - v. Items that may be infested by rodents and insects: rats, mice, fleas, lice, bed bugs.
 - vi. Items that pose a risk of fire or explosion, combustibles and propane tanks; any item containing fuel or corrosives or other unidentified liquids.
 - vii. Backpacks and closed containers, such as totes, boxes and other storage vessels that contain hazardous materials such as paint, flammable materials, or materials that are not labeled or identifiable or not in their original containers will be discarded.
 - viii. If personal belongings are co-mingled or littered with needles, human waste, or other health risks, the entire pile of belongings may be disposed of. The presence of clothing in a backpack or container shall not be the sole reason to discard the backpack or container.
 - ix. Drug paraphernalia as defined by RCW [69.50.120](#), unless used for lawfully prescribed drugs.



- (d) Perishable items such as food, controlled substances, contraband, and trash or debris will not be collected and stored. These items will be discarded. Contraband and controlled substance should be handled by trained professionals and consistent with applicable law.
- (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or prohibit county officials from enforcing any other county or state laws, including, but not limited to, laws governing use of controlled substances or weapons, fire codes, and public nuisance laws.
- (f) County department directors for Central Services, Department of Community Development, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Environmental Health & Water Quality, Public Health, and Public Works, shall designate at least one or more staff members as Designated County Personnel ("DCP") as defined by [Section 3.6](#) above who receive mandatory annual training by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office to determine whether an item is personal property; in all cases where there is any doubt, under the totality of the circumstances, whether the item is personal property, the item shall be considered to be personal property under this Policy.

3.16 Unauthorized encampment

"Unauthorized encampment" for the purpose of this Policy means an encampment that has not been approved or permitted to be located on county owned property.

4.0 Unauthorized Camping on Public Property Prohibited

- 4.1 Unauthorized encampments on county properties that are a threat to public health and safety, or interferes with the public's ability to use county-owned or county-controlled property, facilities, and rights-of-way for their intended purposes are prohibited.
- 4.2 Unauthorized camping on public property includes all day-use parks as well as authorized campgrounds when posted rules are not being followed.
- 4.3 Camping on county-owned facilities and public property is prohibited, unless expressly permitted by the Jefferson County Parks Manager (see JCC [12.25.060](#)), the Jefferson County Administrator or approved designee, or by an official act of the Board of County Commissioners.

5.0 Removal of Obstructions and Immediate Hazard from Unauthorized Encampments

- 5.1 Obstructions and immediate hazards. Except in exigent circumstances involving an imminent threat to life, safety, health, or infrastructure, normal noticing requirements set forth in this Policy shall be satisfied prior to the enforcement and removal of any obstructions and immediate hazards within encampments.



- 5.2 Obstructions and immediate hazards within encampments may only be removed immediately with approval by a county director or approved designee according to applicable laws and policies. Obstructions and immediate hazards may only be removed immediately without “notice” under this section, if determined to constitute a real and imminent threat to public safety.
- 5.3 A decision to remove any personal property as an obstruction or immediate hazard shall be reviewed and approved by a director or approved designee prior to removal, including a determination of whether prior notice is required and if so, how long it must be posted.
- 5.4 Prior notice shall be given if it is safe to do so. The notice shall state:
 - (a) the date the notice was posted;
 - (b) that the obstruction must be immediately removed and is subject to removal by the county without further notice;
 - (c) where any personal property removed by the county will be stored;
 - (d) how any stored property may be claimed by its owners; and,
 - (e) how to contact the county’s ADA Compliance Coordinator.
- 5.5 If the obstruction is determined to be under the control of an individual who is present where the obstruction is observed, written notice shall be given to the individual advising of immediate removal of the obstruction.
- 5.6 Any personal property removed as an obstruction or immediate hazard may be relocated with the assistance of the DCP to a location identified and requested by the property owner, if appropriate and safe to do so, otherwise personal property will be stored by the county as provided for in Section 12 and may be recovered as provided in Section 13.
- 5.7 Any material that is identified and documented as hazardous items and solid waste may be immediately removed and disposed.
- 5.8 Upon removal of an obstruction or imminent hazard, DCP shall post a notice as provided in Section 11.
- 5.9 The department responsible for storing personal property shall notify the Central Services Department of the storage on the same day that the personal property is stored. Central Services shall post notice of the stored personal property with Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office Civil Division located at the Jefferson County Courthouse and on the county website.
- 5.10 The county’s DCPs shall make regularly make good faith efforts to make sure all local community providers working with the unsheltered population are aware of



the county's website containing this information, specifically including where to find personal property and process for obtaining an individual's file or documents relating to the removal of their personal belongings.

6.0 Prioritization of Encampment Removal

- 6.1 Each county department shall identify and report unauthorized encampment locations on county property under its respective jurisdiction by email to the director of Jefferson County Public Health within one business day of discovering the encampment. Failure to timely report an encampment location does not preclude applying any other provision in this Policy.
- 6.2 Before removal occurs, except in exigent circumstances, the respective county director as identified in Section 3.15(f) above, or their approved designee, shall assess and evaluate the need for removal of unauthorized encampments in accordance with the need to protect public health and safety. Inspection of the site shall occur prior to beginning of any removal process.
- 6.3 The prioritization of encampment monitoring and any assessment for possible removal shall be approached through a public health framework and in consultation between the directors of public health, central services, and the county administrator.
- 6.4 The following criteria, in no order of priority, shall be considered when prioritizing encampments for removal:
 - (a) objective hazards such as moving vehicles and steep slopes;
 - (b) criminal activity beyond illegal substance abuse;
 - (c) quantities of garbage, debris, human or other waste;
 - (d) other active health hazards to occupants or the surrounding neighborhood;
 - (e) difficulty in extending emergency services to the site;
 - (f) imminent work scheduled at the site for which the encampment will pose an obstruction;
 - (g) damage to the natural environment or environmentally critical areas or shoreline;
 - (h) unauthorized camping in a county campground or within county road right of ways causing a safety hazard to the travel public per Section 3.12; and,
 - (i) the proximity of unhoused individuals to uses of special concern, including but not limited to schools, playgrounds or play fields, or facilities providing services for vulnerable populations.



- 6.5 The prioritization may be revised at any time as a result of identification of new encampments, inspection of other encampments, or as new information about an encampment's condition becomes available.

7.0 Encampment Removal and Notice Requirements

- 7.1 DCP shall post notice on or near each tent, vehicle, or structure that is subject to removal stating:
- (a) the day the notice was posted;
 - (b) the date the removal is scheduled;
 - (c) the time range in which the removal will commence;
 - (d) where personal property will be stored if removed by the county; and,
 - (e) how to contact the county's ADA Compliance Coordinator.
 - (f) how personal property may be re-claimed by its owner; and,
 - (g) information concerning shelter alternatives and contact information of an outreach provider that can offer more information. This information will also be updated and maintained on the county's designated website page.
- 7.2 If individuals are present at the encampment, DCP shall give written notice if reasonably possible, indicating that the encampment is scheduled for removal on the date and time provided on the notice.
- 7.3 The notice shall be posted no fewer than 72 hours before an encampment removal and the removal shall occur no later than seven (7) days after the notice posting date.
- 7.4 If the action to physically remove the encampment is not commenced by DCP within the removal date and time range provided in the notice, the DCP shall re-post notice of encampment removal before removal may occur. DCP may diligently pursue to completion a removal properly commenced during the removal date and time range.
- 7.5 This notice shall be printed in English and any other language the county determines would further the purpose of the notice.
- 7.6 Nothing in this section shall prohibit DCP from posting notice that the removal of a large encampment will occur over a period of several days, provided each day's operations start during the period identified in the notice. Some encampment sites include tents and structures separated by infrastructure such as overpasses. Removal operations may proceed through such sites so long as they start on some portion of the sites within the times specified on the notice.



8.0 Identification and Offering of Alternative Shelter Options Before Removing Non-Obstructing Encampments

- 8.1 Prior to removing an encampment, DCP shall identify and offer any available alternatives locations for individuals in the encampment to seek shelter, available housing, or authorized encampment areas.
- (a) The DCP is encouraged to check whether the alternatives are available to the encampment occupant starting on the date an encampment removal notice is posted and are encouraged to continue checking availability, as often as is practicable, until the encampment removal is completed.
 - (b) The Jefferson County Department of Public Health shall maintain, or cause to be maintained, a daily list of alternatives while encampments on county-owned property are active, which list shall be shared with the Central Services Department and designated outreach staff.
- 8.2. The alternatives may include housing programs, emergency shelters with or without day programs, authorized encampments, and “no barrier” authorized shelters or encampments.
- 8.3 To constitute a bona fide shelter alternative, the host of the offered location may not require religious instruction in return for shelter.

9.0 Outreach for Encampment Removals

- 9.1 Outreach personnel and DCP shall visit each encampment site at least once between the time that notice of removal is posted and the scheduled removal date.
- 9.2 Outreach personnel and DCP shall be present at the commencement of removal activities on the date an encampment removal is scheduled to start according to the posted notice and are encouraged to check availability and facilitate the offer of shelter alternatives and other services until the encampment removal is completed, as frequently as can be reasonably and safely accomplished.
- 9.3 Outreach personnel may leave an encampment removal operation if outreach services have been refused by all people present at the site. Outreach personnel shall return to a site if an individual requests services before the encampment removal is completed.

10.0 Encampment Site Clean-up

- 10.1 All county personnel, vendors, outreach workers, and other personnel necessary for an encampment removal and cleanup shall be present at the start of an encampment removal. The county’s designated ADA Compliance Coordinator or approved designee shall be present at the start of an encampment removal and shall remain



available and on-call for the duration of the encampment removal process, should any individual request assistance.

- 10.2 Encampment removal shall be documented in writing and with photographs. Central services will designate an appropriate storage file for documentation in Laserfiche and whichever department is responsible for documenting and photographing the area will be responsible for filing that information directly. All forms used to document the encampment removal will be approved by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
- 10.4 Tents and structures that were not previously posted with a notice but are in the immediate area of tents or structures that were posted with a notice may be removed if the tent or structure was placed in the immediate area after notices were posted.
- 10.5 Personal property shall be stored as provided for in Section 12 and may be recovered as provided for in Section 13.
- 10.6 DCP may remove and dispose of garbage, debris, waste, and hazardous substances or items.

11.0 Post-Encampment Removal Notice

- 11.1 DCP shall prominently post a notice at the site where an encampment has been removed and the site cleaned up at the conclusion of the removal.
- 11.2 The notice shall state:
 - (a) the date the cleanup was performed;
 - (b) whether personal property was stored by the county;
 - (c) where the personal property is stored and for how long, after which it will be destroyed;
 - (d) how to contact the county's ADA Compliance Coordinator.
 - (e) how any stored personal property may be claimed by its owner, including contact information for DCP or the county department storing property; and,
 - (f) contact information for outreach personnel who can assist individuals with shelter alternatives and other services.
- 11.3 This notice shall not be removed by DCP for a minimum of 10 days.
- 11.4 The department organizing the cleanup shall send documentation of the cleanup to the Central Services Department for recordkeeping within five business days of the conclusion of the cleanup.



12.0 Storage of Personal Property Removed from an Encampment

- 12.1 The county department conducting the encampment removal shall make arrangements to store all personal property encountered when removing obstructions and immediate hazards, or when removing encampments, provided that the county has no obligation to store personal property that is hazardous, or is reasonably expected to become a hazard during storage.
- 12.2 Personal property shall be stored at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, located at 81 Elkins Road, Port Hadlock, WA 98339, and is a location commonly used by the county for storing property, and is accessible by public transportation. Other types of property such as impounded vehicles, RVs, motorhomes, or tiny homes, may need to be stored at alternative county locations as space allows. The county location for any stored property shall be made publicly available.
- 12.3 The encampment site shall be posted with a notice if personal property is removed from the site pursuant to this Policy. All departments are required to work in consultation with the Central Services Department who shall be responsible for maintaining a record of the site and date of the encampment removal, and where any personal property is being stored with contact information.
- 12.4 The Central Services Department shall maintain a website as part of the County's main website where information can be obtained and made available upon request to individuals seeking information for how to find information about an encampment removal or personal property, law enforcement, various departments of the county, and the Board of County Commissioners.
- 12.5 DCP shall maintain a log of personal property removed from an encampment. Each log item shall be kept in a manner consistent with the county's record retention schedule.
- 12.6 Personal property that is not recovered after 60 days from and including the day the property was stored may be discarded or donated by DCP.

13.0 Recovering Stored Personal Property

- 13.1 Individuals claiming that personal property has been removed from an encampment may contact Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Civil Division or the Central Services Department to retrieve personal property.
- 13.2 The individual shall describe the personal property with particularity. Identification, if available, may be requested. However, no identification is required for an individual to recover the property so long as the individual can adequately describe their belongings and where they would have been located prior to the removal. The log of personal property shall indicate the date and time of recovery of the personal property, a photo of the recovered property, the



identity of the individual if known, or if not known, a physical description of the person.

- 13.3 Personal property may be recovered by an individual at the location where the property is stored. Alternatively, individuals with a documented disability may request that the property be delivered to the individual at a location within 10 miles of the encampment, if the location is safe and appropriate for delivery by vehicle. If delivery is requested and approved by DCP, DCP shall make reasonable efforts to make delivery within five (5) business days.

14.0 Encampment Removal from an Emphasis Area

- 14.1 The county may identify a specific area as an Emphasis Area.
- 14.2 Except as provided in Sections 14.6(a) through 14.6(c) below, an area may not be identified as an Emphasis Area and enforcement of an Emphasis Area shall not commence until: an encampment or obstruction removal has occurred; the area is otherwise free of encampments; and the area has been signed as an Emphasis Area.
- 14.3 If an area has been designated as an Emphasis Area, the area shall be inspected by the county at least once each day by Central Services. The area shall be signed, and may be fenced. The signage shall identify: (1) the location of the Emphasis Area; (2) that camping is prohibited in the Emphasis Area; (3) that any material found in the Emphasis Area may be removed without further notice; (4) where any personal property removed is stored; and (5) how any stored personal property may be claimed by its owner.
- 14.4 Individuals camping in an Emphasis Area and their encampment-associated personal property may be removed as an obstruction.
- 14.5 The Central Services Director or designee shall identify Emphasis Areas on the county's website.
- 14.6 The following county property are hereby declared an Emphasis Area.
 - (a) The Courthouse and its grounds are hereby declared an Emphasis Area. Camping at and on the surrounding grounds of the Jefferson County Courthouse, located at 1820 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend, Washington, is prohibited. Camping is unsafe for building security and county operations that include visitation by members of the public, as well as a secure and safe work environment for county employees. Permanent signage shall be posted as required by this section. Furthermore, use of the Jefferson County Courthouse and Courthouse grounds after working hours as defined by the Board of County Commissioners is only allowed in accordance with prior authorization, as determined in Resolution No. 60-04 (11/15/2004).



- (b) County offices located on the “Castle Hill Campus” and its grounds are hereby declared an Emphasis Area. This includes but is not limited to County offices for Public Health (615 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend), Environmental Health & Water Quality (617 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend), Department of Community Development (621 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend), and Jefferson County Public Works (623 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend). As mentioned above in Section 14.6(a), camping is unsafe for building security and county operations that include visitation by members of the public, as well as a secure and safe work environment for county employees. Permanent signage shall be posted as required by this section.
- (c) All county property within close proximity to schools, playgrounds or play fields, or facilities providing services for vulnerable populations are hereby declared an Emphasis Area. Upon passage of this Policy, specific site locations shall be clearly identified and maintained on the County’s website. Permanent signage shall be posted as required by this section.

15.0 Limitations

- 15.1 No Additional Legal Rights. This Policy does not create legal rights beyond those obligations and rights created by statute or other laws binding on Jefferson County. The provisions of federal and state law control, if there is any conflict with this Policy.
- 15.2 Except where mandated by statute, any duties identified in this Policy are discretionary or advisory only and shall not impose any affirmative duty on Jefferson County.
- 15.3 No Basis for Liability. This Policy is not intended to and shall not be construed to create or form the basis of any liability on the part of Jefferson County, or its officers, staff, or agents, for any injury or damage resulting from any action or inaction on the part of Jefferson County related in any manner to the enforcement of this Policy by its elected officials, officers, staff, or agents.



16.0 Amendments and Corrections

- 16.1 Jefferson County reserves the right to apply and interpret this Policy and to revise or change this Policy at any time.
- 16.2 The Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners is authorized to make necessary technical, non-substantive corrections to this Policy including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener's or clerical errors, references, numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references to them.

17.0 Severability

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Policy is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining parts of this Policy.

STATE OF WASHINGTON

County of Jefferson

**In the Matter of Adopting a Revised Policy
on Unauthorized Encampment Removal and
Repealing and Replacing Jefferson County
Policy No. 02.10.23-01**

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, Article XI, section [11](#) of the Washington Constitution, confers upon county legislative authorities a direct and extensive delegation of the police power to adopt such local police, sanitary and other regulations as are not in conflict with general laws; and,

WHEREAS, RCW [36.32.120](#)(7) provides that the county legislative authorities shall make and enforce, by appropriate resolutions, all such police and sanitary regulations as are not in conflict with state law; and,

WHEREAS, police power is that inherent and plenary power which enables prohibition of all things hurtful to the comfort, safety and welfare of society; and,

WHEREAS, the scope of police power is broad, encompassing all those measures which bear a reasonable and substantial relation to promotion of the general welfare of the people; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County owns and maintains multiple buildings and building complexes and conducts meetings during regular business hours; and,

WHEREAS, the safety and security of the public and county employees engaging in business on county properties is important to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County owns and maintains multiple public parks used by members of the public for intended uses set forth in chapter [12.25](#) Jefferson County Code (County Parks); and,

WHEREAS, the safety and security of the public's ability to access and participate in allowable uses at county parks is important to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County owns and maintains over 400-miles of county road, in addition to countless bike paths and trails, of which adjacent right-of-way properties are often necessary for repair, maintenance, or public safety; and,

WHEREAS, the safety and security of all those using Jefferson County roads, bike paths, and trails are important to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, the county does not have the resources to respond to activities occurring on county properties outside of normal business hours; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has a legitimate government interest in regulating unauthorized encampments to promote public health and safety; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County has invested in a permanent shelter for the unhoused by purchasing land, providing funding and engaging in a comprehensive plan process to create a permanent encampment for the unhoused called Caswell-Brown; and,

WHEREAS, for many years, Jefferson County provided funding for a homeless shelter at the American Legion property in the City of Port Townsend; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County adopted legislation for permitting temporary encampments for the unhoused the ensures temporary encampments for the unhoused promote public health and safety; and,

WHEREAS, ensuring unauthorized encampment removal procedures are carefully tailored to meet legitimate government interests by requiring review of any health or safety hazards and requiring notice whenever possible is important to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, treating all persons living in encampments with care, dignity, and respect is important to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, Jefferson County may remove unauthorized encampments posing threats to public safety or public property use; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Whereas Clauses are Findings of Fact. The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners hereby adopts the above “Whereas” clauses as Findings of Fact supporting this resolution.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this resolution is to adopt a revised policy addressing the removal of unauthorized encampments on Jefferson County property.

Section 3. Repeals and Replaces Policy No. 02.10.23-01. This policy hereby repeals and replaces the Jefferson County Policy No. 02.10.23-01.

Section 4. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this resolution or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this resolution or its application to other persons or circumstances shall be fully valid and shall not be affected.

Section 5. SEPA Categorical Exemption. This resolution is categorically exempt from the State

Environmental Policy Act under WAC [197-11-800](#)(19).

Section 6. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect and be in full force immediately upon passage by the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners.

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____ 2025.

SEAL:

JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heidi Eisenhour, Chair

Greg Brotherton, Member

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Member

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carolyn Gallaway, CMC Date
Clerk of the Board

Philip C. Hunsucker, Date
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney