
SENATE BILL 6155

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senator Wagoner

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a statewide policy on camping on
2 public property; adding a new section to chapter 9A.52 RCW; and
3 prescribing penalties.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 9A.52
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) No person may camp in or upon any public property unless
8 specifically authorized by the public body with authority over the
9 property.

10 (2) At all times, regardless of the availability of shelter, it
11 is unlawful to camp on public property where such activity poses: (a)
12 A substantial danger to any person; (b) an immediate threat or an
13 unreasonable risk of harm to public health or safety; or (c) a
14 disruption to vital government services.

15 (3) At all times, regardless of the availability of shelter space
16 or beds, it is unlawful to camp or store personal property, including
17 camp facilities and camp paraphernalia, or to have unauthorized
18 encampments, at any time in the following locations: (a) Within three
19 blocks of any congregate shelter provided that signs are posted
20 prohibiting camping that are clearly visible to pedestrians; and (b)
21 in public within 1,000 feet of the perimeter of the grounds of a

1 park, a day care center or child care facility, as defined in RCW
2 35.63.170, or a public or private school, as defined in RCW
3 28A.150.010 and 28A.195.010.

4 (4) A violation of this section is a misdemeanor. Unless
5 otherwise subject to custodial arrest on a warrant or probable cause
6 for another crime, individuals subject to enforcement under this
7 section shall be cited and released rather than being booked into
8 jail. With the exception of those who do not meet the criteria for
9 acceptance into a therapeutic court under chapter 2.30 RCW,
10 individuals subject to enforcement under this section shall be
11 referred to a therapeutic court by officer citation.

12 (5) Law enforcement officers shall not issue a criminal citation
13 to enforce unauthorized camping under this section when an individual
14 is on public property at a time when there is no available overnight
15 shelter. Prior to issuing a citation to a homeless person who is
16 sleeping, lying, sitting, or camping outdoors, the police officer
17 must first confirm that a nearby 24/7 low-barrier shelter had
18 available space during the previous 24 hours that could have been
19 utilized by that individual. Confirmation of overnight shelter
20 availability may come from data provided through an approved data
21 system or through direct contact with a nearby low-barrier shelter,
22 and shall consist of the following: (a) Whether a shelter has
23 available space for sleeping; (b) the number of available spaces; and
24 (c) the guests each shelter will accept (i.e., men, women, families
25 with children, etc.).

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