

Panhandling, “Quality of Life” Behaviors – What to Do

When panhandling and other illegal behaviors cause problems for you or your customers, contact the police. Panhandling enforcement is a priority for police, as panhandling can escalate into other problem behaviors. By calling police, business & property owners help police find and address problems, and document when, where and how often problems are occurring.

Who to Call:

a. Dispatch (police non-emergency): **(608) 266-4275 - Press 6** to report a situation in progress.

Call dispatch when the problem is occurring and you need an officer right away. (If an emergency such as violent crime or robbery, call 911). Recommended: Request contact by phone. This makes sure that you receive a follow up call, and that an official record of your report is created.

b. State Street/Capitol Square Neighborhood Office Chanda Dolsen, cell 608-577-5731 (office 267-2677)

Call if there are questions or issues about the response of dispatch. Generally on duty Tues-Sat 8am to 4pm; schedule may vary. (She will likely follow up on any calls to dispatch.) You can also email for non-urgent problems or questions: cdolsen@cityofmadison.com

When to Call:

When you witness illegal behaviors, including the following. Call right while the behavior is occurring.

- Panhandling near a business, i.e., within:
 - fifty (50) feet of an automatic teller machine (ATM)
 - twenty-five (25) feet of any open sidewalk cafe
 - twenty-five (25) feet of an intersection
 - twelve (12) feet of any building that contains nonresidential uses
 - twenty (20) feet of any building entrance that contains nonresidential uses
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- Panhandlers (or others) who:
 - Sit or recline on a public sidewalk
 - Display aggressive or intimidating behavior, or try to get a handout via threat or coercion
 - Obstruct the path of any passer(s)-by
- Public alcohol consumption
- Public urination or defecation
- Fighting or behaviors threatening or intimidating to you or your customers
- Littering
- “Camping” or living on benches
- Living or sleeping in bus shelters; remaining in bus shelters unless waiting for the next bus
- Smoking in bus shelters
- Sleeping in doorways, entryways
- Selling things without a permit

What to Report:

Try to describe in detail:

- The person, including clothing and specific defining physical characteristics
- What they are doing (specific). For example, do you see a beer can? A liquor bottle?
- Where are they now (exact location)
- If problem is recurring – what days and times does it occur? What is the pattern?

Even if police can't come right then, making calls generates data on the problem and its extent. We understand that this is extra effort on your part, and appreciate your help in addressing these issues.

Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID). Updated May, 2010