

## Frequently Asked Questions: San Rafael Camping Ordinance Amendments

*On May 6, 2024, the City Council passed Ordinance 2035, amending its regulations for camping on public property by individuals experiencing homelessness. The following is designed to inform the public what to expect going forward.*

### **What is the City doing with its new camping ordinance?**

Recent changes to the camping ordinance include restrictions on the maximum space allowed for campsites, and minimum distances those campsites must be located from private property lines, other campsites, and schools, for individuals with no alternative shelter available. The City also has committed to providing longer warning and notice periods to individuals in violation of the ordinance, and will assist them in knowing how they can comply. These changes reflect the City's commitment to addressing homelessness through a compassionate and balanced approach.

### **What are the main changes to the ordinance?**

**Campsite Size Restrictions:** The changes to the camping ordinance are aimed at improving clarity and effectiveness. These include allowing campsites of up to 200 sq. ft. for one person and 400 sq. ft. for up to 4 people camping together; this doubles the space for an individual allowed in the prior ordinance.

**Proximity and Safety Buffers:** Campsites must now maintain a 10-foot clearance area around each campsite and a 10-foot setback to any other campsite, public utility infrastructure, or neighboring private properties; the prior ordinance required much more distance between campsites. The former ordinance required spacing of 200 ft between campsites; this requirement is eliminated.

**Proximity to Schools:** The changes add a requirement that camps be located a minimum of 250 ft from the property line of any preschool or K-12 school.

Additionally, the changes clarify that enforcement will only take place after a person in violation receives notices and opportunities to comply.

### **When would the changes take effect?**

As required by California law, the newly enacted local ordinance will take effect 30 days after its passage. The regulations will be effective on June 5, 2024.

### **How will the City help affected individuals understand and comply with the new camping regulations?**

The City will provide educational handouts and materials to the homeless community informing them of the ordinance. The City will maintain a website at <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/ordinance-regulating-camping/> with information on the ordinance and accompanying maps of areas where camping is not allowed. If individuals are found to be in violation of the ordinance, they will receive written warning notices outlining the violation, actions required for compliance, and potential penalties for non-compliance. Furthermore, individuals may request physical demarcations of allowed campsite boundaries to assist them in complying with the ordinance.



# City of San Rafael

## Updated Camping Regulations – Effective June 5, 2024

Beginning June 5, 2024, the City of San Rafael’s new camping regulations, under Chapter 19.50 of the San Rafael Municipal Code, will go into effect.

<https://storage.googleapis.com/proudcity/sanrafaelca/2024/05/4.b-Ordinance-Regulating-Camping-on-Public-Property.pdf>



### Camping remains prohibited at:

- Open Space property
- Albert Park
- Boyd Park
- City Parking Garages
- Lindaro Street (portion)
- Falkirk Cultural Center

### With questions, contact:

**Lynn Murphy,**  
**San Rafael Police**  
**Department**  
**415-485-3489**

**Chris Hess,**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Community Development**  
**415-458-5017**

**Camping is not prohibited at other public properties if you have no alternative shelter available.**

### NEW Defined Limits of Campsite Size:

Campsite for  
One Person  
**Maximum of  
200 square feet**

Campsite for  
up to Four  
People  
**Maximum of  
400 square feet**

- Campsites must be at least 10 ft apart.
- Campsites must be at least 250 ft from schools and at least 100 ft from playgrounds.
- Campsites must be at least 10 ft from private property lines, including fences.
- Campsites must be at least 10 ft from public utility infrastructure such as PG&E utility boxes.