

Encampment Strategy – Council Update

Reporting Period: January 1st to June 13th, 2024.

Response Statistics:

YTD is January 1, 2024 – June 13, 2024 at 12:00PM

ENCAMPMENT RELATED REPORTS	Reporting Period	Year to Date
Total Encampment Calls:	348	348
Calls Triaged (includes Debris calls):	455	455
Total Encampments Identified¹:	221	221
Tier 1:	41	41
Tier 2:	160	160
Tier 3:	14	14
Encampments involving minors	6	6
Total Triaged Encampments Resolved:	221	221

¹For Reporting Period: With 455 calls triaged, 221 were identified to be an encampment in alignment with the Tier 1-3 parameters. The remaining 234 calls were for a variety of other debris, mess in lane, duplicate reports, or issues that moved on before triage could occur.

OTHER RELATED REPORTS	Open	Resolved	Total	Year to Date
Needle Debris:	1	38	39	39
Biohazard:	0	80	80	80
Debris:	1	110	111	111
Total:				

COORDINATED CLEANUPS	Reporting Period	Year to Date
Coordinated Cleanups:	15	15
Locations:	Galt Gardens, Civic Area, North of westbound Whoop Up Drive, North of City Yard, 700 Blk 5 Ave. N., 800 Blk. 2 A Ave. N., 50 1 Ave. S. 2800 Blk. Scenic Dr. S., 400 Blk. Stafford Dr. S., 3000 Blk. 26 Ave. N., 400 Blk. Stafford Dr. N.	
Structures Removed:	97	97
Total KG of Debris Removed:	8750	8750

311 REPORTS RECEIVED	Reporting Period	Year to Date
	537	537

Key updates:

- Encampments in Lethbridge commonly consist of structures built from tarps and tents. However, an increase in encampments being constructed with wood and other building materials. These structures often involve the use of tools to affix materials together or to clear branches and dirt from the area. Additionally, encampments are increasingly being established in remote and difficult to access locations that make triaging and removal more challenging. There has been an increase in the number of confirmed encampments on the west side, often in areas that are hard to reach and have minimal foot traffic. These more permanent structures and challenging locations not only complicate removal efforts but also pose safety risks to both the inhabitants and the response teams. The complexity of these encampments requires additional time and sometimes coordination with other city departments and external partners to effectively manage and address the issues.
- Increase in complaints regarding encampment occupants being verbally aggressive towards the public. The Encampment Response Team (ERT) has noticed that verbal aggression among occupants has escalated compared to 2023. During coordinated encampment cleanups, members of the Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) are present to ensure safety. During the triaging of encampments, two staff members are always on site, with LPS available to assist if needed. Complaints about aggressive behavior from the public are directed to the LPS complaint line via 311. When reports of possible violence or aggression are received to the complaint line, LPS officers respond to address the situation.
- The ERT is managing some changes in staffing:
 - Encampment Support Specialist role was vacated in May 2024, this has now been filled with the previously servicing Encampment Response Technician being promoted. Backfilling of the Encampment Response Technician is underway as job postings have closed and interviews are underway. Interviews are also underway for the seasonal/term Encampment Response Worker which will support with capacity through the busier season (Spring through Fall).
 - Job postings for two Outreach Specialists have also closed and interviews are underway. Successful candidates will provide outreach to encampments and unhoused people in the community. City of Lethbridge Outreach vehicle (Previously purchased in 2022 for external service providers through Federal Reaching Home funding) will be used by Outreach Specialists.
- Encampment outreach is partnering with the Interfaith Food Bank as the lead and community partners, to match water donations, up to \$5000. The donated water will be distributed to unhoused people who can't escape the heat through various outreach groups.
- This year has seen an increase in the number of triaged encampments with a minor present. When an encampment triage is completed and a minor is found present in a

encampment, the ERT will place a call to Children Family Services (CFS). CFS will then attempt to visit the youth or have LPS attend the area to bring the youth back to their placement.

- The area around the shelter is currently a hotspot for encampment activity. With a pending expansion to the shelter building, the ERT will meet with the Blood Tribe Department of Health, Alberta Health Services, and Lethbridge Police Service to discuss this expansion and impact to the surrounding area as well as how a coordinated approach can support the surrounding area.
- The ERT is currently working with one unhoused couple and one unhoused female and have got them to connect with Lethbridge Housing Authority through the Integrated Coordinated Access system. Encampment occupants are provided with information on where to access the coordinated access system.