



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

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### **San Francisco Provides Outreach and Shelter to Hundreds of Homeless People -- Response to Unsafe Homeless Encampments Spurred a Week of Action— Outreach Efforts Continue**

(San Francisco)—The Public Health Department of the City and County of San Francisco responded this week to unsafe conditions at two homeless encampments with coordinated efforts among multiple City agencies to provide better, safer environments for hundreds of homeless people living in dangerously unsanitary conditions.

The Health Department informed City officials on Tuesday February 23 that the large congregation of tents on Division Street was determined a public health nuisance, with unsanitary conditions that made it unsafe for the people living there. An additional notification was made for the nearby Showplace Square area on Thursday February 25. In each location, a 72-hour order to vacate was issued by Health Director Barbara Garcia, after inspections by the Health Department observed an accumulation of garbage, human feces, hypodermic needles, urine and other unsanitary conditions.

Over the past week, the Health Department's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and San Francisco Public Works have been on site daily, working with homeless people to provide relocation options and clean the area. A total of 539 contacts with homeless people in these two areas were made by HOT's outreach workers (many people were contacted more than once), and 114 people had accepted shelter as of Tuesday March 1. The vast majority, 95, were sheltered at Pier 80, a newly opened facility that provides services such as medical screening, case management and connection to benefits. It also serves three meals a day, offers clean and safe bathroom facilities and does not have a curfew. Another 19 people accepted shelter at other City shelters, including the Navigation Center in the Mission District.

"The health and safety of our residents is paramount, especially when addressing the needs and public health challenges of those living on our streets," said Mayor Lee. "We are making investments in expanding the first-of-its-kind Navigation Center and winter shelters like Pier 80 to assist our homeless residents to access a clean, safe place to take shelter while we find long-term housing solutions for people in need, especially during an extended wet winter."

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The HOT team and Public Works will continue to do outreach and cleaning, at these locations and throughout the City, to assist homeless people to connect to available resources and to keep the City safe and sanitary for them, and all residents.

Additionally, Mayor Lee announced in December 2015 that he is creating a new Department to help at least 8,000 homeless residents permanently exit the streets and move into housing and services and has committed to maintaining and enhancing funding for homeless prevention and solutions of at least \$250 million per year.

Pier 80 expanded capacity over the past week from 150 to 160 beds, and is expected to grow to 180 beds this week. Homeless people may bring their belongings and pets to Pier 80, and may come as couples or in groups. The Human Services Agency manages Pier 80, the Navigation Center and other City shelters.

San Francisco Public Works had a 50-member crew on the ground Tuesday in the Division Street and Showplace Square areas. Using brooms, rakes and shovels, they hauled away garbage, picked up used syringes, scoured away feces and urine with steam cleaners and washed down the streets. They began the operation 4:30 a.m., and the last tent came down 6 ½ hours later. In addition to cleaning the streets and sidewalks, Public Works' crews transported people's belongings to shelters, if they requested it, and to the department's Operations Yard, where they will be stored for up to 90 days should people want to retrieve them.

The areas were cleared Tuesday, and no arrests were made. Public Works also placed barricades on the sidewalks so that people would not put tents back up, to make sure the public health concerns that prompted the abatement order don't occur again. A safe path of travel was kept for pedestrians.

The Division Street encampment was defined as the areas between South Van Ness Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, on both the east and west sides of Division Street. The Showplace Square encampment encompasses the four blocks bordered on the north by Division, on the south by 17th Street, on the west by San Bruno St. and on the east by Vermont St. The Public Works and Police Departments managed the cleaning and clearing of the areas and enforcement of the Health Department orders, which expired Friday Feb 26 on Division Street, and Sunday February 28 on Showplace Square.

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