

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

### NOTICE

July 30, 2020

1.11

**TO:** All Department Personnel

**FROM:** Chief of Police

**SUBJECT:** PROCEDURES WITHIN THE VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE INVOLVING PERSONS AND/OR PROPERTY

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Notice is to establish procedures and provide guidance to Department personnel contacting citizens within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ).

The Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone is an area in the City of Los Angeles declared to be at the greatest risk of uncontrolled wildfires by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The area is deemed as such due to its hilly and mountainous terrain, most of which is ripe with hazardous brush (see map at: [www.lafd.org/fire-zone](http://www.lafd.org/fire-zone)).

Previously, signs were required to be posted in and around the VHFHSZ before an arrest for trespassing could be made. A recent amendment to Los Angeles City Council Ordinance, Number 186291, makes it so any person found within a VHFHSZ who is not in a defined campsite, road or hiking trail, only need to be advised verbally by a public officer that they are trespassing before an arrest can be effected.

### **PROCEDURES:**

If officers locate any person within the VHFHSZ, officers shall advise them that they are in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; if they refuse to leave the area, they are in violation of trespassing. Officers should attempt to gain compliance and advise the individuals to leave the area on their own, with the understanding that they are not to return; if they do, they could be arrested for trespassing. Officers should give the person a reasonable amount of time to remove their possessions before escorting them from the area. Officers should advise any person experiencing homelessness of outreach and additional services that are available to them. If the person asks for services, officers should obtain their information for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) or advise them to call 211.

If directed to the area of an encampment within a VHFHSZ, officers should take appropriate action to locate the person living at that encampment. If an encampment is located, but it is unsafe for officers to approach due to dangerous terrain, officers should request additional resources to aid in the investigation, including but not limited to: Park Rangers, an Air Unit equipped with Forward-Looking Infrared Radiation (FLIR) camera, Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (HOPE) teams, the Off-Road Unit or the Metropolitan Division Mounted Unit. Officers can reach out to the Unified Homelessness Response Center (UHRC) for advice.

If, after given a reasonable amount of time to collect their belongings, the persons refuse to leave the VHFHSZ, officers shall arrest them for 57.4908.4 LAMC - Restricted Entry or Presence in the VHFHSZ. Officers should make the physical arrest of the violator on the booking approval form (12.31.00). Officers should also make the request that the arrestee not be released on his or her own recognizance due to the offense likely to continue.

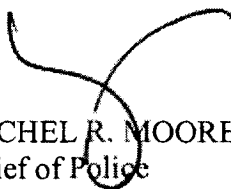
**NOTE:** Officers should not arrest any individuals within the VHFHSZ if they are on public roadways, inhabited areas, or established trails and campsites open to the public strictly for being in the VHFHSZ. If officers are met with unusual circumstances, officers can contact the Unified Homelessness Response Center (UHRC) for advice.

Officers shall photograph any remaining property and forward the photographs to the UHRC via email to [uhrc@lapd.online](mailto:uhrc@lapd.online). The email should include a summary of the incident, name of arrestee, any contact information, and booking number. This will allow the UHRC to coordinate with Los Angeles Sanitation to remove the additional property left at the location and allow the owner of the property to retrieve it from sanitation.

If officers find an encampment without individuals present, officers shall document the location of the encampment by address or latitude/longitude. Officers shall photograph the encampment and give a brief description of hazards located in or around the encampment, as well as the approximate size of the encampment. Officers shall contact the UHRC for advice and forward the information and photographs via email to [uhrc@lapd.online](mailto:uhrc@lapd.online) for coordination and removal.

Officers should use caution when deciding whether to enter a VHFHSZ, specifically when confronted with different types of heat/fire sources. Heating sources found within encampments can be compromised or booby-trapped. Due to the risk of fires in these zones, officers should use an abundance of caution and not tamper with any devices. Officers shall request the Fire Department to address any active fire regardless of the source. Los Angeles Sanitation should be requested for the destruction/disposal of any heat/fire sources not in active use. Officers shall attempt to contact the UHRC for advice when any heat/fire sources are located. All after-hours requests should be made directly to the Fire Department.

Please refer further questions to Lieutenant II Yasir A. Gillani, Office of Operations, UHRC at (213) 484-4855. Additional information is available on the Department Local Area Network in the Reference Library folder under the Department Homeless Coordinator's Office link.



MICHEL R. MOORE  
Chief of Police

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