

Safety Information for BID Business and Property Owners – Updated March 2015

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

When panhandling and other illegal behaviors cause problems for you or your customers, contact the police. 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:

- **911: Emergency** such as violent crime or robbery
- **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. Recommended: Ask for the case number.
- **State Street/Capitol Square Neighborhood Officer Jessica McLay** (608) 438-1066 (cell) JMcLAY@cityofmadison.com. Contact to discuss ongoing issues, problems, or for advice on handling situations. If there is an incident in progress, call the non-emergency dispatch line or 911.

When to Call:

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

- Panhandling* anywhere in the area of the attached map (see other side) which includes the entire BID footprint. As of today, there are no places in the BID where panhandling is legal.
- Panhandling is also illegal (citywide) within twenty-five (25) feet of:
 - an automatic teller machine (ATM)
 - an open sidewalk cafe
 - an intersection
 - any alcohol licensed establishment
- Panhandlers (or others) who:
 - 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

Note: You can also ask someone to leave your business (private property) or licensed café space.

***Panhandling IS:** Directly requesting, asking for, trying to procure a handout or donation of money, goods or other gratuity from another person. This could include running after someone shaking a cup in their face, but not saying anything.

Panhandling IS NOT: Standing with a cup but not saying or doing anything; a musician playing with instrument case open for donations; Salvation Army bell ringer; selling Street Pulse for a donation.

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). More info on our [Safety webpage](#).