

From: "Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 3/16/2023 6:04:27 PM
Subject: Key Messages for E Hastings Street Encampment: Response to Increased Risk of Violence

Dear Mayor and Council

As a follow-up to the Hastings encampment briefing note, please see the following key messages you may wish to use, should you receive questions from your constituents as work advances over the next few weeks. As usual, we encourage you to send media inquiries to media@vancouver.ca

- City Engineering crews have been engaged in daily work to seek compliance with the Street and Traffic By-law 2849, Section 71A and the Fire Chief's Order and encourage the voluntary removal of structures from the E. Hastings encampment
- There has been a noticeable increase in violence and tension associated with the encampment zone, which is currently occupied by a wide range of people for a variety of purposes. While there are people in the encampment who are vulnerable and without housing, many others are not there for shelter alone and are there engaging in commercial and/or illicit activities.
- City Engineering staff are also encountering increased aggression and harassment from people in the encampment and advocates as they do their work. It is important City staff can do their cleaning and by-law enforcement work safely and address the Fire Order and life safety risks that are present because of structures.
- At the request of the City, the VPD is present to assist our Engineering crews in ensuring their safety as they work
- The work – while very difficult – is critical in terms of addressing life safety risk and returning the street to diverse activities.
- The City's Homelessness Services Outreach staff have also been visiting every day to connect with individuals sleeping overnight in the encampment and working with BC Housing and Vancouver Coast Health to connect them with supports, shelter and housing when available
- Where individuals are required to remove their structures and have indicated that they do not have other housing, they are being offered personal storage options, and access to shelter spaces or SRO rooms when available.

If you have questions, please email Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts Culture, and Community Services Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca or Angela MacKenzie, Associate Director, Civic Engagement & Communications Angela.Mackenzie@vancouver.ca

Thanks,

Karen

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