

PANHANDLING



In general, the act of panhandling is considered constitutionally protected. However, it can be intimidating and cause public safety concerns at times. In some cases panhandling can lead to thefts and robberies. The Everett Police Department wants to educate community members and businesses on when panhandling becomes illegal, as well as provide suggestions on where to donate to organizations that provide services to those experiencing poverty.

While many panhandlers passively ask for money or hold signs, others are more aggressive and make loud, repeated and intimidating demands. Aggressive begging is illegal and when it happens near ATM machines, dark parking lots, in restrooms or near your car, can cause safety concerns.

EVERETT MUNICIPAL CODE 9.52 DEFINES AGGRESSIVE BEGGING AS:

- ◇ Begg in a manner that intentionally hinders or obstructs the free passage of any person in a public place; or
- ◇ By words or actions, begs with intent to intimidate another person into giving money or goods.

BE CAREFUL IF ASKED FOR MONEY AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- ◇ Restrooms
- ◇ On sidewalks
- ◇ Near crosswalks
- ◇ On or near public transportation
- ◇ At parks, playgrounds or public entertainment venues
- ◇ Near parked or stopped vehicles
- ◇ At entrances to buildings
- ◇ Near ATM's and financial institutions
- ◇ At or near gas stations, liquor stores or convenience store properties

BE CAUTIOUS OR CALL 911 IF:

- ◇ There is physical contact
- ◇ You are threatened
- ◇ You are followed by the person who was told "no"
- ◇ You fear bodily harm
- ◇ Obscene, profane or abusive language is used
- ◇ Your path is blocked
- ◇ You feel intimidated

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE CONFRONTED BY AN AGGRESSIVE BEGGAR?

- ◇ Call 9-1-1
- ◇ Don't give money - Politely say "no"
- ◇ Keep your wallet and purse secured and out of sight

Not all panhandlers are homeless and many want money for alcohol or drugs. While opening your wallet or purse, you are more likely to be victimized. The Everett Police Department recommends you give money to charities who help those in need and make a difference. For a list of charities that work directly with local people in need, see the City of Everett website at:

www.everettwa.gov/1391/Safe-Streets-Get-Involved.

For more information: www.everettwa.gov/CrimePrevention

FOR EMERGENCIES, CALL 911



Your safety is important!

Walk away from aggressive panhandlers

Consider donating to a charity

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