



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS AN ENCAMPMENT?

Valley Water's Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance defines an encampment as one or more structures operating as a single entity, occupied by an individual or group of individuals, that is located illegally on Valley Water or other public property. An area where there are no structures, but where personal property is stored or where animals are kept and or maintained without authorization from Valley Water, is also considered an encampment.

WHAT IS VALLEY WATER DOING TO ADDRESS ENCAMPMENTS?

Valley Water collaborates with local agencies, social service providers, and law enforcement officers to address the challenges posed by encampments located on Valley Water property and their impacts to waterways and water supply and flood protection facilities.

Valley Water's **Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance** was adopted on Nov. 26, 2024, to address the environmental, health, and safety impacts of encampments. The ordinance established new regulations prohibiting encampments and encampment-related activities on Valley Water lands and outlining Valley Water's approach to encampment cleanup, removal, and enforcement related to violations of the regulations.

Enforcement of the ordinance using an educational approach and progressive enforcement model will begin Jan. 2, 2025. You can read the ordinance and Ordinance Implementation Plan and view a map of Valley Water lands at: valleywater.org/encampments.

HOW DO I REPORT A POTENTIAL ENCAMPMENT?

You can report encampment-related concerns to Valley Water via our online system at: access.valleywater.org/s/. If you have an immediate safety concern, call 911.

WHEN WILL VALLEY WATER REMOVE AN ENCAMPMENT?

Valley Water will prioritize encampment cleanup and removal as necessary to protect employee and public safety and to carry out Valley Water business.

Implementation of the ordinance uniformly across all Valley Water lands would displace unsheltered people from encampments before adequate safe relocation sites, shelter, and housing options are available in Santa Clara County. In consideration of this reality, Valley Water will establish priority levels for encampment cleanup and removal under the ordinance.

HOW DOES VALLEY WATER PRIORITIZE ENCAMPMENT CLEANUP?

HIGH PRIORITY FOR ENFORCEMENT

An encampment will be prioritized as high priority for cleanup and removal under any of the following conditions.

- The encampment is located in the path of or obstructing access to flood protection or water infrastructure facilities or projects; or designated restoration or vegetation management sites.
- The encampment is located within an area with posted signage listing restrictions on camping or re-encamping.
- The encampment poses an immediate safety risk, including situations that involve Valley Water staff safety or public safety issues, as determined by government agencies and their police or fire departments.
- The encampment is associated with extreme environmental hazards, including impacts to fish and wildlife or imminent human health or fire hazards.

In addition, unauthorized motor vehicles and trailers located within a Water Resources Protection Zone will be classified as high priority for cleanup and removal.

LOW PRIORITY FOR ENFORCEMENT

Valley Water's **Encampment Condition Guidelines** establish basic parameters by which unsheltered individuals living in

encampments on Valley Water lands can minimize negative environmental, health, and safety impacts by promoting positive camping practices and discouraging harmful actions.

Encampments that do not create operations or maintenance access issues and that meet the **Encampment Condition Guidelines** will be considered low priority for cleanup and or removal. You can read the Encampment Condition Guidelines at: valleywater.org/encampments.

WHAT IS VALLEY WATER'S ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE PROTOCOL?

When cleanup and removal action is warranted, per the priority levels described above, Valley Water staff will follow an **Encampment Response Protocol**:

Post the encampment for cleanup and removal.



Provide 72 hours notice before cleanup and removal.



Collaborate with local agencies for offers of available services and or housing or shelter.

Arrange for processing and storage of personal belongings.



Perform encampment cleanup and removal.



Valley Water may take one or more of the following enforcement actions in response to activities prohibited by the ordinance:

Request the violator cease the prohibited activity or activities.



Request the violator relocate an encampment.



Prioritize an encampment for cleanup and or removal.



Request law enforcement involvement to address unlawful activity.



CONTACT US

To find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions or comments, use our **Access Valley Water** customer request system at access.valleywater.org.



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