

LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

**Illegal Sweep of Homeless by SFPD and Public Works Department
Results in Unconscientious Destruction and Disposal of Property**
City blatantly violates formerly secured policy on the rights of the homeless

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(San Francisco, CA) – The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area joins the Coalition on Homelessness and local community members in condemning the illegal sweep of homeless people and their property at the encampment that was until recently on 13th and Division Streets.

The sweep, which was enforced yesterday by the San Francisco Police Department, the California Highway Patrol and the Department of Public Works, was in violation of Constitutional law, state law, and City policy. Despite the legal obligation to store property, the City destroyed and disposed of much of the property within the encampment, including a walker belonging to a disabled veteran. The notice given to residents did not meet legally mandated requirements: it referenced 72 hours, but the crews destroyed personal items within 24 hours.

The Lawyers' Committee reminds the City that seizing and destroying the property of homeless residents is a violation of the constitutional right of every person to be free from unreasonable search and seizure. Such violations of San Franciscans' constitutional rights are unacceptable.

We urge the City to compensate the residents who suffered harm as a result of this displacement and to comply with the existing policies that regulate just and humane treatment of the homeless and their property.

In a city where there is only one shelter bed available for every six homeless people and over 8,000 homeless households are on waiting lists for public housing, we must not criminalize the community members amongst us struggling to overcome poverty and a lack of access to shelter. In a city where 61% of homeless residents have disabilities, we cannot tolerate the deliberate destruction of walkers and other personal property essential to the survival of our most disadvantaged neighbors. We demand accountability for the illegal displacement inflicted by the City against its homeless residents.

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Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, founded in 1968, works to advance, protect and promote the legal rights of communities of color, and low-income persons, immigrants, and refugees. Assisted by hundreds of pro bono attorneys, LCCR provides free legal assistance and representation to individuals on civil legal matters through direct services, impact litigation and policy advocacy.