



HIGH POINT POLICE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION FLYER



Tips on Reducing Aggressive Panhandling

With the revitalization of the downtown area and the coming addition of more businesses throughout the City to include restaurants, shopping and entertainment venues, the High Point Police Department wants to ensure that our tenants and guest are aware of the possibility of solicitation / panhandling and knows what to do when it is encountered. Our businesses in uptown, downtown, the market district and all other areas are critical assets to the city of High Point and as your police department, we want everyone to be safe.

Asking for money or other assistance is protected as Free Speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, however High Point City Ordinance 12-1-13 prohibits aggressive solicitation. Violation of this ordinance is a misdemeanor and can be punishable by a fine of up to \$500.00.

Confrontation with an aggressive panhandler can often be a frightening and confusing situation, especially if the person is caught off guard or surprised by the approach of an unknown individual. Below are some guidelines on "what to do" and "what not to do" in these situations.

As a community member, business owner, employee or guest, when confronted by an Aggressive Solicitor:

- Remain aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Be polite, but stern when saying "No" and then end contact- do not engage in an argument.
- Call the police if threatened, do not allow the situation to escalate or become physical.
- DO NOT give the solicitor money.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach at your business and ban solicitors from the property.
- Train employees and ensure loitering is not allowed on the property.
- We encourage help and assistance to those who are displaced or less fortunate but suggest using official community resource groups to oversee this effort. This ensures that philanthropy and business does not conflict. See the back of this page for some suggested resources for referrals or organizations to which you can contribute in order to help those in need.

Some businesses have been tolerant of solicitation in the past but due to an increase in numbers and the degree to which aggressive tactics may be used by solicitors, many owners/operators have recognized a need to help protect their customers and employees. Many of the violations that take place during aggressive solicitation occur on private property. The tips listed above are things that can help the High Point Police Department address the matter before it becomes a problem and impacts safety and profits.

In the event there is an issue on your property remember to call 911 for emergencies. If you see anything suspicious or want to report a crime that has already occurred to police call 336-883-3224. For general information, we encourage business owners or their representatives to contact one of our Community Engagement officers at 336-883-3224.

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