

CITY OF REDDING



POLICE DEPARTMENT

1313 California Street, Redding, CA 96001-3396

530.225.4200 FAX 530.225.4553

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Chief Peter T. Hansen
530-225-4211 www.reddingpolice.org

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

PANHANDLING

With the warmer weather, there has been an increase in the number of calls for service in regard to “panhandlers,” those begging for money, in shopping centers and parking lots throughout the city.

The Redding Police Department suggests community members refrain from giving money to panhandlers. Many panhandlers hold signs declaring themselves as single mothers, disabled vets, or in need of gas to get back home as a means to garner sympathy. In fact, this type of activity is usually a scam, and the majority of “donated” money is not used for food or clothing, rather is spent on alcohol, cigarettes, or illegal substances.

There are many local charities that offer assistance to those who are in desperate and true need of assistance including the Salvation Army, the Good News Rescue Mission, People of Progress, Loaves and Fishes, and a variety of other social service programs.

Penal Code Section 647(c) prohibits accosting a member of the public by any person for the purpose of begging. Although many panhandlers do take “no” for an answer, sometimes a panhandler will become aggressive and/or threatening. If this does occur and the panhandler represents a genuine threat, do not hesitate to contact the Redding Police Department.

Following are some suggestions if one encounters an “aggressive” panhandler:

- *Keep moving:* Keep a distance between yourself and the person asking for money.
- *Say as little as possible:* Don’t engage in conversation even if provoked by rude comments.
- *Don’t give in:* No means no and you don’t want to take out your wallet in the presence of an aggressive person.

Remember, kindness by donating to panhandlers only reinforces negative behavior. Instead of giving to an individual panhandler, money can always be donated to one of the local charities listed above.