

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

UNSHELTERED IN VERMONT

Do I have a right to camp or sleep outside if I have nowhere else to go?

Yes. Police cannot legally arrest or ticket you for sleeping, sitting, lying down, eating, camping, etc. on public land when alternative space is not available.

Can police or other government officials ask me to go somewhere else?

Yes, cities and towns can make certain public areas no-camping locations. However, they cannot ban you from camping on all public land. Some towns and cities have written policies that can be found at www.acluvt.org/kyr-unsheltered.

Can police or other government officials take my belongings?

You have a right to privacy and to be free from officials "unreasonably" taking your property. Officials can ask you to move your belongings to perform routine maintenance. If you have been given notice to move your belongings and you do not move them, officials may take your belongings.

Can police or other government officials throw away my belongings?

No. If police or government officials have taken your belongings, they must store them and give you a reasonable opportunity to pick them up. They are not required to store items that pose health or safety risks.

Can I panhandle or otherwise request support from those around me?

Yes. It is unconstitutional for cities and towns to limit your speech by punishing you for asking for money.

What about my pet, emotional support animal, or service animal?

Service animals, emotional support animals, and pets are treated differently under the law. In general, service animals are allowed in all areas where the public is normally allowed. Emotional support animals are supposed to be allowed by housing providers, but not all emergency shelters fit this category. Shelters may generally prohibit pets. Read more at www.acluvt.org/kyr-unsheltered.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you believe your rights have been violated, contact:

- Vermont Legal Aid at 1-800-889-2047 or visit www.vtlegalaid.org
- ACLU of Vermont at (802) 223-6304 or email info@acluvt.org

For help with shelter, food, and other essentials:

Call 211 or visit www.vermont211.org