

**Mayor's Office Response to City Council Chairperson,
Phil Mendelson's, concerns about 17th Street Encampments:**

"There are two encampments at 17th and Corcoran St. NW. These encampments are not new; they've been present for quite some time. There is one in front of the Safeway and one in front of McDonalds. The encampment in front of McDonalds has grown in the past few months. It was previously a makeshift structure with an accumulation of cardboard and it has now grown to three tents. DMHHS outreach visits this encampment on a weekly basis. Additional outreach providers from Miriam's Kitchen and DHS also visit and engage with the residents on a regular basis. After reviewing the community's outreach data from last month, we noticed that this site was visited on average four days out of the five-day work week. That translates to more visits, per week, than most encampments of this size. This site will also be receiving a temporary hand-washing station this week.

We conducted a cleanup at this site on 3/12. As of 3/16, we transitioned from full cleanups to trash-only and will continue to do so for as many sites as we can, per the CDC guidelines on how to handle encampments during this pandemic. Additionally, some constituents have asked why we did not enforce the "200 feet guideline" that is posted on the sign. Ultimately, the Encampment Coordinator is able to make judgment calls based on the information that is provided to them. Please note that the residents did still move their belongings away from our cleanup zone and we did remove unwanted and soiled items as well as accumulated trash.

Again, please be advised that we have shifted our focus to conducting trash-only cleanups during this pandemic per CDC guidelines. There are rare cases that require full engagement cleanups and we are assessing those on a case-by-case basis. We expect that we will be able to continue trash-only cleanups at the encampments at 17th and Corcoran for the time being. We will keep our website fully up to date with information on cleanups.

We have heard from a few residents that they do not feel safe around encampment residents. It is important to remember that any illegal activity should be directed at, and reported to, the Metropolitan Police Department. Any concerns related to harassment or drug-related activity falls under their purview. The Encampment Response Team, within the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, is responsible for monitoring encampments, providing outreach, and scheduling cleanup. Safety concerns need to be addressed to the law enforcement officials at MPD.

We know this is a controversial site. We have people reach out to our team asking us to do more and permanently remove the encampments (which we are unable to do). At the same time, we also hear from resident's asking us to halt cleanups all together and leave encampments residents alone. We do our best to provide a balanced approach that responds to the health and safety of all residents."