

Aggressive Panhandling & Solicitation —It's a Crime and You Can Help!

Panhandling is a growing social and public safety concern across the country. But dealing with panhandlers can be challenging. In response to resident concerns, the City of Minneapolis has strengthened the panhandling/solicitation ordinance to specifically address aggressive panhandling.

What's the difference between solicitation or panhandling and *aggressive panhandling*?

Many panhandlers passively ask for money or hold a sign. Others are much more aggressive, making loud, sometimes repeated demands and some panhandlers choose to solicit in places that are particularly intimidating such as near ATM machines, in a restroom or near your car on the road. This is aggressive panhandling and **in Minneapolis it is against the law. You can take action, both to stop the crime and to make a real difference to help people in need.**

Minneapolis City Ordinance on Aggressive Solicitation

Minneapolis City Ordinance 385.60 defines Aggressive Solicitation as:

Verbal requests for money or an item or offering an item or service of little value for a donation in the following locations:

- Restroom
- Within 10 feet in any direction from a crosswalk
- Public transportation vehicle or facility
- On any park land, playground or public entertainment venue, including within 50 feet of entry or exits
- Bus or Light Rail stop or shelter
- Parked/stopped vehicle
- Sidewalk café
- Entrance of commercial or government building
- Within 80 feet in any direction from an ATM or financial institution (previous distance was 20 feet)
- At or within 10 feet of gas station, liquor store, or convenience store property

And in the following way:

- Involving physical contact
- Blocking path/entrance
- Following a person who said “no” to ask again
- Using obscene/profane/abusive language
- Creating fear of bodily harm
- Threatening criminal act upon property
- Intimidating to person
- While under influence of alcohol or drugs
- Soliciting in a group of two or more
- Soliciting after sunset or before sunrise

If you are confronted by an aggressive panhandler, what should you do?

- Call 9-1-1, tell a cop
- Don't give money to panhandlers: Politely say “no”
- Not all panhandlers are homeless-many may make up stories to get money to use for drugs or alcohol; when you take out your wallet or purse, you're more likely to be a victim of a crime
- Give money where it will make a difference
- Give money to a charity that makes help available to people in need
- For more information: www.minneapolis-safezone.org/minneapolis/default.aspx or call 311

Remember, aggressive panhandling does NOT include:

standing passively, sitting or performance art or a sign or other indication that a donation is being sought, without any vocal request other than in response to an inquiry by another person.

Taken from:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/crime-reporting/AggressivePanhandling.asp>