

ORDINANCE NO. 02-13-2025-1

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF VAN, TEXAS, PROVIDING REGULATIONS CONCERNING CAMPING IN PUBLIC AREAS AND ON PRIVATE PROPERTY; ESTABLISHING A CAMPING PERMIT; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A REPEALER CLAUSE; PROVIDING A PENALTY AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Van, Texas is a Type-A General Law City organized and existing pursuant to the laws of the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Van has determined that it is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of its citizens to regulate camping within the city's corporate limits and pass this Ordinance to effectuate said regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF VAN, TEXAS, AS FOLLOWS:

I.  
DEFINITIONS

- A. *Camping* or *Camp* means:
1. Making preparations to construct a temporary shelter, such as the setting up of a tent, laying down bedding, lying in or on a cot, sleeping bag, bedroll or other similar sleeping equipment, or the construction of a temporary shelter with other materials, including cardboard or newspaper;
  2. Storing or accumulating clothing, food, beverages, or other personal belongings; or
  3. Using any tent or temporary shelter.
- B. *Permit* means a camping permit issued pursuant to this Ordinance.
- C. *Private Property* means any real property owned by an individual, entity, or organization that is not within the definition of public area as defined herein.
- D. *Public Area* means an outdoor area to which the public has access and includes, but is not limited to streets, right-of-way, highways, roads, parks, parking lots, alleyways, pedestrian ways, and the common areas of schools, hospitals, apartment houses, offices buildings, transport facilities, retail shopping establishments and properties owned by any public entity.

**II.**  
**CAMPING IN PUBLIC AREAS PROHIBITED**

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to camp in a public area within the city limits of the City of Van, Texas.
- B. A person's actions shall constitute camping when it reasonably appears, in light of all circumstances, that the person is using the public area for living accommodation purposes, regardless of the person's intent or the nature of any other activities in which the person is also engaging.

**III.**  
**CAMPING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY**

- A. It shall be unlawful for any person to camp on private property for a period longer than 72 hours without a permit issued by the City.
- B. A person's actions shall constitute camping when it reasonably appears, in light of all circumstances, that the person is conducting camping activities on the private property for living accommodation purposes, regardless of the person's intent or the nature of any other activities in which the person is also engaging.
- C. It is an affirmative defense to a violation of this section if the person was camping in an approved area designated by the City or on property for which the person has received prior permission by the owner or agent in charge of the property, and a permit has been issued by the City.
- D. Any individual that desires to camp on private property for a period longer than 72 hours, must apply for a camping permit with the City Secretary. The approval or denial of any permit shall be solely within the discretion of the Chief of Police of the Van Police Department or his designee.
- E. All applications for a camping permit must be submitted on the required form, fully completed, and submitted to the City Secretary at least 48 hours prior to the start of the camping activities.

**IV.**  
**PENALTY**

The violation of any provision of this section shall be unlawful and shall constitute a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine not less than \$200, nor more than \$500. Citations may be issued to any person conducting camping activities and the owner of the private property. Each day such violation is permitted or continued to exist shall be and is deemed to constitute a separate offense.

**V.  
SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

If any provision, section, sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance, or the application of same, to any person or set of circumstances is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, void, or invalid, the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby, it being the intention of the City Council of the City of Van that no portion hereof or provision or regulation contained herein shall become inoperative or failed by any reason of unconstitutionality or invalidity of any other portion, provision or regulation.

**VI.  
REPEALER CLAUSE**


Any Ordinances, Resolutions and/or other Policies of the City of Van which may be in conflict with any of the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of any such conflict.

**VII.  
EFFECTIVE DATE**


This Ordinance shall become effective immediately after its approval and publication as required by law.

PASSED and APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Van, Texas, on this 13  
day of February, 2025.

APPROVED:

  
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Ernie Burns, Mayor Pro-Tem

ATTEST:

  
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Sereca Huff-Huggins, City Secretary

