



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: Emergency Operations Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Additional Details Regarding OPD's Enforcement in Frank Ogawa Plaza and Snow Park

Oakland, CA – This morning at 4:30 am, the Oakland Police Department began enforcement of the “Notice of Violations and Demand to Cease Violations” issued on Friday, October 21, to persons staying overnight in Frank Ogawa Plaza and Snow Park related to the Occupy Oakland demonstration.

By approximately 5:30 am, Frank Ogawa Plaza had been contained, and mobilization of the clean-up phase had begun.

Operational Details

During the two enforcement operations, 79 arrests were made in the Frank Ogawa Plaza area and 6 arrests were made at Snow Park. Those arrested included individuals from as far away as Florida and Illinois.

As a defense against protesters who were throwing items from the encampment's kitchen at officers, law enforcement officers deployed bean bags and gas canisters. No injuries to protesters or law enforcement officers have been reported.

The City of Oakland appreciates the outstanding mutual aid assistance provided by local law enforcement agencies. Mutual aid was provided by the cities of Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Newark, Pleasanton, San Jose, San Leandro and Union City as well as the Alameda County Sheriff's Department, San Francisco County Sheriff's Department, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol, the Solano County Sheriffs Department and the University of California Police Department.

To ensure public safety and minimize traffic in the area, the City of Oakland advised downtown employers and City employees to delay the start of the work day until 10 am.

City buildings surrounding Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Hall, 150 Frank Ogawa Plaza, and 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza) are closed to the public until further notice. All City Council committee meetings scheduled for today have been cancelled.

Clean-Up Operations

Once the Plaza was cleared, Public Works crews began assessing the damage to the lawn, Plaza and infrastructure, including hardscape.

Frank Ogawa Plaza will remain closed until public health and safety conditions can be improved; this includes debris, human waste and hazardous materials removal.

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The City remains committed to respecting free speech as well as maintaining the City's responsibility to protect public health and safety. Once the health and safety hazards on the Plaza are resolved, the City will re-open the Plaza as soon as practical to allow peaceful daytime assembly. No camping or overnight stays will be permitted.

Retrieval of Property

In addition, crews are logging property recovered from the Plaza and storing them in a City warehouse until retrieved by the rightful owners. More information about this process can be found at www2.oaklandnet.com/oak031906.

Background

From the outset of the demonstration which began two weeks ago on Monday, October 10, the City of Oakland has focused on three clear goals: 1) facilitating the protesters' right to free speech and peaceful expression, 2) maintaining public health and safety, and 3) crowd control.

Two days into the demonstration, the City began providing written notices of the ground rules required in order to protect the health and safety of the group and to respect the Plaza, which is a public park.

After the first weekend, the City began getting reports of problems and communicated with the demonstrators about additional health and safety concerns (e.g., fire hazards, sanitation, food storage, unsafe structures built into the Plaza, noise).

By the second week, conditions began to deteriorate. On at least two occasions, American Medical Response (AMR ambulance company) was denied access to provide medical care. The Oakland Fire Department and Police Department were denied access to the Plaza to respond to calls for service. The City also received reports that an individual was severely beaten. Sanitation conditions worsened with frequent instances of public urination and defecation, as well as improper food storage. The existing rodent problem on the Plaza was exacerbated and vector control was unable to implement measures to control the rat problem due to the presence of overnight campers. The Plaza was physically damaged on a daily basis by graffiti, litter, and vandalism. Fire hazards continued unabated, including cooking with open flame, improper storage and disposal of propane tanks, storage of grease, inadequate fire extinguishers, density of tents and flammable materials, and smoking in tents. Specifically:

- On **Monday, October 17**, the City received its first report of a sexual assault, and a television reporter was bitten by a protester's dog.
- On **Tuesday, October 18**, the dynamics of the group had changed. We began to receive numerous complaints of threatening, intimidating behavior; individuals threatened to riot if OPD facilitated their march through downtown that evening; public health and safety requirements were being ignored. The City began collecting intelligence to determine the amount of mutual aid that would be required to address the situation.

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- On **Wednesday, October 19**, the City sent its fourth notice communicating additional health and safety concerns, including sexual offenses, fighting, public drinking, and intoxication. The County Health Department conducted its first inspection and the Oakland Fire Department conducted a second inspection. The City began putting appropriate plans in place to put an end to overnight camping and cooking in the Plaza, and OPD formally requested mutual aid.
- On **Thursday, October 20**, the City put the demonstrators on notice that as a result of multiple conditions—including fire hazards, increased levels of violence, denial of access to public safety personnel to assist injured people, mounting sanitation hazards, health hazards, physical damage to the Plaza and lawn, graffiti, and disruption of the Plaza for broader public use—they were required to vacate the Plaza between 10 pm and 6 am. The Fire Department “red tagged” Frank Ogawa Plaza and issued an order to abate and cease operations.
- On **Friday, October 21**, the City issued a formal notice of violations and demand to cease overnight camping and cooking operations. In addition, on Friday night and throughout the weekend, the City’s homeless services team coordinated with Operation Dignity and Alameda County to arrange for shelter, meals, and service referrals for the homeless population camping on the Plaza.
- On **Monday, October 24**, the Fire Department attempted to assist with the removal of propane tanks and cooking oil to address some of the fire hazards. The last notice was issued to cease overnight lodging.

The City of Oakland’s goal has been to facilitate individuals to remove their tents, cooking facilities, and belongings, and to leave cooperatively. The City has partnered with community allies to help facilitate communication with the protesters regarding their departure, and we provided services to assist those with housing and mental health needs.

Securing an adequate level of mutual aid has also been a primary goal, especially considering the regional impact that the Occupy demonstrations have had on local law enforcement agencies.

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