Santa Monica Park Rules: What's Allowed, What Isn't, and Who to Call

Updated October 28, 2026. Every phone number was checked against an official page.

Conduct, not condition. Being homeless in a Santa Monica park is not against the law. Sitting on a bench, resting in the shade or using the restroom is allowed for everyone. Behavior is what the law covers, and the rules below apply to every person the same way: a resident, a visitor or someone with nowhere else to go.

Here are the main rules in plain words, with the Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) section for each and who to call. If anyone is in danger, call **911**.

What are the main Santa Monica park rules?

Rule	In plain words	Code	Who to call
Park hours	City parks are closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Nobody may enter or stay in a closed park.	SMMC 4.55.120	SMPD non-emergency **(310) 458-8491**
No camping	No camping in public parks or other prohibited public places. Camping means setting up or occupying a camp facility as living quarters.	SMMC 4.08.095	SMPD non-emergency, or 311 for an existing camp
No tents or structures	No putting up, keeping or occupying a tent, lodge, shelter or structure in a park. On the beach, no tent or other temporary housing or shelter.	SMMC 4.55.060, 4.55.240	SMPD non-emergency, or 311
No drinking in public	No drinking alcohol on public property, including parks and beaches, and no open containers there, outside the exceptions in the code.	SMMC 4.08.200	SMPD non-emergency

Rule	In plain words	Code	Who to call
No smoking	No smoking in any public park, on any public beach or anywhere on the Pier.	SMMC 4.44.020	SMPD non-emergency
Dogs on leash	Dogs on public property must be on a leash six feet or shorter, except in designated off-leash areas. Owners must pick up after them.	SMMC 4.04.155, 4.04.370	SMPD non-emergency
No fires	No fires, barbecues, portable stoves or charcoal in parks and on beaches, except in City-provided grills.	SMMC 4.55.100	**911** for an active fire
Quiet hours	Noise and amplified sound are restricted from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weeknights, and 10 p.m. Saturday to 9 a.m. Sunday.	City park rules, under SMMC 4.55.400	SMPD non-emergency
No aggressive solicitation	Asking for money by harassing or menacing someone on a public street or sidewalk is against the law.	SMMC 4.08.740	SMPD non-emergency, or 911 if threatened

Violations of the Park and Beach Code can be charged as a misdemeanor, with a fine of up to $1,000, or as an infraction, with a fine of up to $250 (SMMC 4.55.420).

Is it illegal to be homeless in a Santa Monica park?

No. Being homeless is a condition, not a crime. A person can sit, rest, read or use the restroom in a park during open hours, the same as anyone. What is against the law is conduct: camping, putting up a tent, staying after 11 p.m., drinking or smoking in the park, or threatening people. Those rules apply to everyone, whether or not they have a home.

Can someone sleep in a Santa Monica park?

Not overnight. Parks close from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m., and camping is not allowed in parks at any hour. The code defines camping as setting up or occupying a camp facility as living accommodations, so sitting or resting on a bench during open hours is not camping.

Who do I call about a problem in a park?

Call **911** if anyone is in danger. Call or text **988** for a mental health or substance use crisis. Call SMPD non-emergency at **(310) 458-8491** for a rule being broken right now. File a Santa Monica 311 request for a camp, abandoned property or a recurring problem, so it is on record. More detail is on who to call.

What does the plan add?

Two things. First, a real offer of help before enforcement, every time: a bed the same day, and for someone too sick to choose, the lawful tools that exist for that (Offer a bed first, then enforce). Second, public numbers park by park: warnings, citations and offers of help each month, so residents can see the rules applied the same way everywhere (Open books). These are resident drafts; nothing has been submitted to the City Council.

Sources

1. City of Santa Monica: Park Rules
2. Santa Monica Municipal Code, Chapter 4.55 Park and Beach Code (4.55.060, 4.55.100, 4.55.120, 4.55.240, 4.55.420)
3. Santa Monica Municipal Code, Chapter 4.08 (4.08.095 camping, 4.08.200 drinking, 4.08.740 aggressive solicitation)
4. Santa Monica Municipal Code, Chapter 4.44 Regulation of Smoking (4.44.020)
5. Santa Monica Municipal Code, Chapter 4.04 Animals (4.04.155, 4.04.370)
6. City of Santa Monica: Questions and answers on the anti-camping ordinance

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