

Edmonton Plans to Deal with Aggressive Panhandlers

Edmonton has begun looking for ways to deal with aggressive panhandlers in public places. The Edmonton Police Service is most concerned with a group of 20 or 30 panhandlers who can make as much as \$400 a day, and who police estimate were responsible for 90 percent of complaints filed last year.[\[1\]](#)

Mayor Mandel has suggested looking to Saskatchewan as a model for dealing with the problem.[\[2\]](#) Saskatoon passed a bylaw in 1999 to control and regulate panhandling in public places.[\[3\]](#) The bylaw prohibits panhandling within 10 meters from a bus stop, an automated teller, the doorway to a bank, and from parked cars, including those stopped at traffic lights. The penalties for a violation range from \$100 for a first offence to \$10,000 for repeat offenders. Calgary passed a similar panhandling bylaw, also in 1999, but it limits fines for a violation to \$100.[\[4\]](#) Edmonton police are proposing a fine of \$250.

In the B.C. Supreme Court case *Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of BC v. Vancouver (City)*,[\[5\]](#) similar panhandling legislation was challenged on the grounds that it infringed sections 2(b), 7, and 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.[\[6\]](#) However, the B.C. court held that the bylaw did not infringe these sections of the *Charter*, and upheld the legislation as constitutional.

The proposed Edmonton bylaw is currently being discussed by City Council, but no legislation has yet been drafted.

[\[1\]](#) CBC News, "Some panhandlers making \$400 a day: police" (26 Jan 2009).

[\[2\]](#) Gordon Kent, "Mayor says Saskatoon's approach worth exploring" *The Edmonton Journal* (20 June 2007).

[\[3\]](#) *The Panhandling Bylaw*, City of Saskatoon Bylaw 7850 (10 May 1999).

[\[4\]](#) *Panhandling Bylaw*, City of Calgary Bylaw 3M99 (8 March 1999).

[\[5\]](#) *Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of BC v. Vancouver (City)*, 2002 BCSC 105 (CanLII)..

[\[6\]](#) *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (U.K.), 1982, c. 11 (CanLII)