



Squamish
Helping Hands

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Encampment Incidents Show Growing Challenges for Unhoused People

Services and resources are being provided by Squamish Helping Hands to ensure basic survival but are outside the funding and mandate of the organization

May 20, 2026, Squamish, British Columbia: There have been two recent incidents in the encampment located behind Under One Roof at 37871 3rd Ave.

On the [morning of Thursday, May 14](#), the Squamish RCMP executed a search warrant and found real and imitation weapons, ammunition, drugs, and drug trafficking materials. Two men—both associated with the encampment—were arrested, charged, and released on the same day.

At roughly 5 a.m. on Tuesday, May 19, the police entered the encampment in response to multiple 9-1-1 calls regarding a possible shooting. The officers involved found several people affected by bear spray and determined that a shotgun was discharged during the incident. No serious injuries were reported.

Squamish Helping Hands does not manage the encampment but is working with the Squamish RCMP to address safety for its team, volunteers, and participants given the encampment's proximity to the organization's building. The mandate and funding of the organization are dedicated to individuals living in the transitional housing units and people staying in the emergency shelter.

“By nature, encampments are not safe places to live and the safety of our participants, staff, and volunteers is always our highest priority,” says SHHS executive director, Lori Pyne. “Our team provides basic survival supplies, like food, blankets, and clean clothes, to encampment residents to keep people alive but our resources are being stretched thin as we continue to try to meet the growing need.”

Encampments are caused by many different reasons including the accelerating cost-of-living, substance use disorders, and the lack of services for individuals experiencing mental health crises or complex diagnoses. A recent Point in Time Homeless Count indicated there were at least 125 unhoused people in Squamish.

“Encampments have become an unfortunate reality in our community, like many others across Canada and the world,” said Pyne. “While we are doing the best with what we have, this is a complex and challenging issue without simple solutions. Any and all plans for new housing to address this issue must be grounded in a deep understanding of the underlying causes of encampments and include community-led solutions to find appropriate and safe locations to be successful.”

For more information, please contact:

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About Squamish Helping Hands Society:

Squamish Helping Hands Society extends a range of compassionate and trauma-informed programs and services from its 4-story building in downtown Squamish. Named Under One Roof, Squamish Helping Hands offers shelter and transitional housing, food security programs, outreach, harm reduction, drug poisoning response, and well-being services. As a not-for-profit charity, it relies on grants and donated financial and in-kind contributions to operate. The COVID-19 pandemic, toxic drug supply and affordability crisis have intensified the need for its programs and services.

Ways to Give and Support Squamish Helping Hands:

- Become a program partner to help deliver wrap around care
- Donate cash or in-kind services
- Volunteer for the food bank and in the kitchen at Under One Roof
- Raise funds through community events or campaigns
- Support and advocate for more dedicated resources in Squamish
- squamishhelpinghands.ca/ways-to-give

Additional Resources

- [Encampments | Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Point-In-Time Homeless Count](#)