

How to say “no to a Panhandler

- Walk with confidence. The streets of Houston belong to everyone.
- Act confident; your attitude is a powerful tool in dealing with panhandlers
- Make eye contact or acknowledge the person with a nod.
- Politely say “no”and don’t engage in dialogue with them, ignore them.
- If they persist, loudly say “NO” several times. Panhandlers don’t like to draw assistance to themselves.
- Walk away. If you are followed, retreat to the nearest business, and report the incident.
- Keep in mind that assistance is available for these persons.
- Remember: Aggressive panhandling is illegal. If you feel threatened, seek out a uniformed Police Officer or call 911.
- The bottom line, if people stop giving money to panhandlers, panhandling will stop.

National Coalition for the Homeless

- 202- 462-4822
- <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

Coalition for the Homeless of Houston

- 713-739-7514
- www.homelesshouston.org

City of Houston

- 713.837.0311 or 3-1-1
- <http://www.houstontx.gov>



The University of Texas at Houston Police Department

7777 Knight Rd.
Houston TX 77054

Phone: 713-792-2890

Saying NO to panhandling

Tips dealing with a
tough social issue

Serving with Courage and Compassion



**Commission on
Accreditation for Law
Enforcement Agencies, Inc.**

What is Panhandling

Panhandling, (or soliciting for money), is legal in some areas of Houston. As long as the panhandler does not become aggressive. Aggressive Panhandling is not allowed.

Panhandlers are drawn to areas where the opportunities to collect money are best—areas where there are a lot of pedestrians or motorists, especially in areas where pedestrians and motorists are likely to have money.

Panhandling is a difficult issue faced by every major city. People who panhandle may need help, but social services agencies usually support destructive habits, including alcohol and drug addiction.

Downtown workers, patient families, and visitors are encouraged to redirect their generosity to the institutions best suited to helping our city's homeless and struggling citizens. By donating your money and volunteer time to organizations and service providers, you play an integral role in improving the lives of these individuals.

Panhandlers will use whatever strategy works; such as asking for spare change, requesting money to help with a “problem”, or offer unwanted assistance to exploit a sense of obligation.

Panhandling Facts:

- **Panhandlers more commonly target women than men.**
- **In Houston, panhandlers must have a license to solicit money**
- **Aggressive panhandling is illegal.**
- **Panhandlers are rarely homeless**
- **Best way to help those in need is to donate to charities**
- **Street performers and vendors with permits are not panhandlers**
- **Studies Most panhandlers suffer from drug or alcohol addiction and giving them spare change only enables the addictions.**
- **When asked for spare change, the best response is a polite “no”.**

Types of Panhandling:

Passive Panhandling: soliciting without threat or menace, often without any words exchanged at all—it maybe just a cup or a hand held out. Must have a license to panhandle.

Aggressive Panhandling: soliciting coercively, with actual or implied threats, or menacing actions. If the panhandler uses physical force or extremely aggressive actions, the panhandling may constitute robbery.

When is panhandling a crime in Houston?

Panhandling is a crime if it is conducted:

In an aggressive manner.

Within 8 feet of an ATM, pay telephone, parking meter, parking fee collection box, transit facility, or fuel dispensing device

Within a distance of eight feet is prohibited after a request is made to discontinue the panhandling.