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**Bylaw officers want to crack down on people begging for money in downtown Calgary**

## Bylaw officers want tougher rules for panhandling

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Bylaw officers want tougher rules to help them crackdown on panhandling

On Wednesday that came closer to reality after a city committee approved the proposed changes to the city's panhandling bylaw. Now it's up to city council to decide whether the new rules will go into the books.

Officers say they have received many complaints from Calgarians who worry about their safety because panhandlers are getting too aggressive. "We are hearing loud and clear from citizens about people who are walking out in lanes of traffic, along medians and holding up signs, shoving signs into their face, making them feel really threatened," says Bill Bruce from Calgary Bylaw Services.

To help solve the problem, Bruce says they need to update the outdated bylaw.

Currently, officers can only fine people who verbally ask for money. What they want is to be able to impose a fine on those who also beg for money by gesturing and using signs, or wandering into traffic.

Some aldermen say to really protect citizen's safety, police also have to be involved. "To me, police play a far more effective role than a bylaw officer trying to run up and chase these people down and give them a ticket," says Diane Colley-Urquhart, the alderman for Ward 13.

Police admit more panhandlers are putting Calgary's image as a safe and clean community at risk.

The chief of police says a stronger police presence downtown should help with the crackdown on aggressive panhandling.

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**Panhandlers could soon be fined for using signs to ask for money**