

Chapter 02 | Policies & Procedures

02.20 Panhandling/No Soliciting Policy

Panhandling or unauthorized solicitation is not allowed at Wisconsin Department of Transportation Roadside Facilities. “Panhandling” means asking for money on the street. “Solicit and Solicitation” means to approach with a request or plea.

There is no specific state statute that addresses panhandling or unauthorized solicitation at roadside facilities. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation State Highway Maintenance Manual, Section 80.20 (A) General Policy, states that “roadside properties” are provided for the safety, comfort, convenience, and enjoyment of the traveling public to use the facilities (restrooms, etc.). Activities which are not safety related are not compatible with the intended use of the roadside site.

Panhandling and Unauthorized Solicitation is not a safety related activity. No receptacle or signage for donations, or receipt of contributions is allowed without a permit from the Department. No individual(s) may demand, threaten, or have intimidating contact with the public. No individual(s) may obstruct, delay, or interfere with, or distract from the free movement of either pedestrians or vehicular traffic, or hamper or impede the conduct of any authorized business. RF Supervisory Staff may request that any person(s) soliciting/panhandling leave the premises. The State Patrol should be notified if the individual(s) refuse to leave.

Authorization may be given, by permit from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, to nonprofit organizations to organize “safety or wake breaks” and serve complimentary non-alcoholic beverages (coffee, soft drinks, etc.) to the traveling public. The specific activity must relate to highway safety.