25-05 - Encounters Involving Possible Federal Immigration Enforcement Operations

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

NEWSLETTER

Field Operations Support Services

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 05 DATE July 11, 2025

ENCOUNTERS INVOLVING POSSIBLE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

PURPOSE

This Newsletter provides guidance to Department personnel when responding to reports or encounters involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other federal agencies conducting immigration enforcement activities within the County. These operations often raise public concern and require a response from Department personnel that prioritizes safety, policy compliance, and public trust.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department may receive calls for service involving suspected immigration enforcement activity, including incidents where federal agents may be operating in the community, near schools, businesses, or homes. These incidents can cause public confusion, fear, and unrest, especially when the agents are in unmarked vehicles, unidentifiable, or decline to show identification to community members.

In these instances, California Senate Bill 54, or the California Values Act which enacted and amended Government Code sections 7282 through 7282.5, and added sections 7284 through 7284.12 and County policy generally prohibit Department personnel from participating in civil immigration enforcement. Department personnel must remain neutral, avoid direct involvement in immigration enforcement, and ensure their actions are consistent with Department policy, the law, and the safety of the community.

DEPUTIES

When encountering or being dispatched to a situation possibly involving immigration enforcement, deputies should:

- Immediately notify a field supervisor, if a supervisor is not already assigned to the incident, of a

"possible federal enforcement action."

- Attempt to identify the federal agents. If the individuals are acting in an enforcement capacity but are not clearly identifiable, deputies should:
    - Request identification or agency credentials from the on-scene federal supervisor or agent-in-charge. If there is no on-scene supervisor or agent-in-charge, request identification or agency credentials from the individuals acting in an enforcement capacity.
    - Record the encounter on body-worn camera, including identification efforts.
    - If the individuals decline to identify themselves, observe from a safe distance and document (such as in a log, incident report, and/or body worn camera):
        - Physical descriptions of individuals
        - Agency markings (if any)
        - Number of personnel involved
        - Vehicle descriptions and license plates

If it is determined that an incident involves federal immigration enforcement conducted by federal agents, the actions of Department members should be limited to those authorized under California law. Department personnel may act to maintain public order, ensure the safety of community members, and protect the lives and safety of federal law enforcement officers involved in the operation. This may include enforcing California criminal laws, when necessary, particularly those related to public safety and public order, such as acts of violence, unlawful assembly, or vandalism.

- Deputies should focus on crowd control and public safety, ensuring the situation does not escalate into violence;
- Remain neutral. Deputies should use de-escalation techniques to prevent conflicts between ICE agents and the public;
- Deputies should avoid physical involvement or assistance in the immigration arrest/enforcement action while maintaining neutrality unless the situation presents a clear and present officer-safety situation for the federal agents;
- The incident should be thoroughly documented, including any actions taken by deputies and federal agents, in an MDC log entry or an incident report if necessary. Deputies should also notify a field supervisor immediately;
- Deputies should clearly communicate to members of the public that the Department is not involved in immigration enforcement and is present to ensure public safety; and

- Use de-escalation techniques to calm tensions and avoid confrontations between federal agents and members of the public.

Documentation and Reporting

Deputies should:

- Complete the appropriate Incident report(s) when required under the following circumstances:
    - A community member alleges a crime (e.g. kidnapping or false imprisonment);
    - There is confirmed criminal activity;
    - There is damage to property related to the incident;
    - Ensure all reports are thorough, objective, and submitted in accordance with Department policy and documentation standards; and
    - Title all Body Worn Camera videos in Evidence.com as “Federal Immigration Enforcement Action.”
- Complete a detailed MDC log entry documenting:
    - The nature of the incident, including location, time, individuals involved and actions taken;
    - Any crowd control or de-escalation measures employed; and
    - Supervisor notification and response.

SUPERVISOR

To ensure proper oversight and compliance with Department and County policies involving federal immigration enforcement actions, supervisors should:

- Respond to calls for service involving:
    - Possible federal immigration enforcement, or;
    - Alleged crimes such as kidnapping or false imprisonment by individuals appearing to be federal agents.
- Ensure that attempts to verify the credentials of the on-scene federal agent(s) or supervising officer(s) have been made.
- Ensure that deputies adhere to California law and County and Department policies regarding federal enforcement while maintaining public safety.

- Notify the Watch Commander immediately and provide all relevant information, including:
    - Nature of the incident;
    - Identity of involved federal agents (if known); and
    - Actions taken by deputies.
- Immediately report to the Watch Commander any incidents involving:
    - Any federal immigration-related interaction with a federal agency/agents;
    - Large-scale public disturbances; or
    - Media attention.

WATCH COMMANDER

Upon notification of a federal immigration enforcement action or relevant incident, Watch Commanders should:

- Closely monitor the situation.
- Document the activity and all pertinent information in the Watch Commander Daily Log, including:
    - Community allegations of criminal activity;
    - Agent identification attempts; and
    - Department members' actions and policy compliance.
- Complete an after-action summary in a Chief's memo, per MPP 4-01/100.25 – Important Cases and incidents, noting:
    - Specific details of the incident; and
    - Any community issues or concerns.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

SH-AD-757 Federal Enforcement Operations - Watch Commander Checklist

MPP 4-01/100.25 - Important Cases and Incidents

MPP 5-09/271.00 - Immigration Inquiries and Notification

MPP 3-01/140.00 Deputy Stops – Government Code Section 12525.5

Newsletter 23-06 AB 2773 (2022) – Stating and Documenting the Reason for Traffic Stops

If you require further information, contact Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411 or fossunit@lasd.org.