18-06 - Immigration Policies, Protocols, and Procedures

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services

IMMIGRATION POLICIES, PROTOCOLS, AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this Newsletter is to advise and update Department personnel about the Department's policies, protocols, and procedures relating to interactions with individuals in the immigrant communities since the enactment of the California Values Act (SB54) and other relevant state legislation on January 1, 2018.

Los Angeles County is home for residents that come from more than 200 countries around the world. The Department invites all persons, including those who are undocumented, to come forward to report crimes without fear of deportation. The Department is committed to impartial enforcement of the law and to treating all persons with dignity and respect regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, or civil immigration status.

Laws, Policies, and Procedures Affecting Our Patrol and Countywide Operations

***Legal Prohibitions*:** The following are specifically prohibited by law:

- Detaining an individual during a field contact on the basis of an immigration hold request;
- Arresting an individual on a civil immigration warrant;
- Using immigration authorities as interpreters;
- Detaining an individual for an actual or suspected immigration violation; and
- Detaining a victim or witness to a crime who is not charged or convicted of committing any crime under state law for a suspected immigration violation or turning the individual over to immigration authorities without a judicial warrant (Penal Code section 679.015).

***Immigration Inquiries and Notifications (MPP section 5-09/271.00)*:** This policy was implemented on September 21, 2015. The main provisions of this policy are as follows:

- Department members shall investigate criminal activity without regard to an individual's legal status and shall not initiate police action with the objective of discovering the individual's immigration status;
- Department members shall neither arrest nor book an individual solely on suspicion of violating a federal immigration law relating to illegal entry, being unlawfully present, or overstaying a visa;
- Department members shall not inquire about any person's immigration status unless the information is absolutely necessary to ascertain their true identity; and
- While interviewing victims and witnesses, Department members shall not inquire about a victim's or a witness' immigration status unless that information is an essential component in their investigation (e.g., human trafficking, involuntary servitude, etc.).

***Place of Birth Inquires*:** Some members of the public may misperceive the purpose of inquiring about a person's birthplace when questioned during a law enforcement contact, especially when contacting the police as a victim or witness. To minimize the potential misperception and possible degradation of public trust, the following procedures shall take effect:

- Victims, witnesses, and temporarily-detained suspects shall not be asked their place of birth for the purpose to determine their immigration status, unless necessary under the particular circumstances to investigate a criminal offense; and
- Arrestees may be asked their place of birth when necessary to the booking process, when necessary to comply with consular notification obligations, when necessary to investigate a criminal offense, or when otherwise required by law.

***Booking/LiveScan process*:** Arrestees shall not be asked their legal immigration status nor whether they are documented or not.

***U-Visas*:** Some undocumented victims and witnesses of certain enumerated crimes may request the Department certify a U-Visa application. The certification does not guarantee they will receive a U-Visa, it's simply one of the criteria required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to apply for a U-Visa. The Department member reviewing the request for certification may inquire as to the requested person's immigration status, when necessary, to complete the U-Visa certification. See FOD 09-002 (revised January 14, 2026) for more information and guidelines on the certification process.

Custody Division

The California Values Act (SB54) specifically prohibits the following:

- Detaining individuals solely on the basis of an immigration detainer;
- Sharing the personal information of inmates with immigration authorities;
- Providing office space that is exclusively dedicated to immigration authorities; and
- Providing the release dates of inmates to immigration authorities unless the release date is available to the public.

Questions regarding the California Values Act (SB54) and cooperation with immigration authorities in Custody Operations should be directed to the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) Release Compliance Desk, at [REDACTED TEXT]

Joint Task Force Participation

Department personnel may participate in joint task forces with federal immigration officials only where the purpose of the task force is to investigate violations of local, state, or federal criminal laws unrelated to immigration enforcement. An annual report shall be submitted by the Department to the California Department of Justice for each task force of which it is a member. The report must include the purpose of the task force, the agencies involved, the number of arrests made, and the number of people arrested for immigration enforcement purposes. Personnel assigned to a task force shall notify Detective Division headquarters they are on a task force. Personnel on a task force shall provide to Detective Division headquarters the statistical information required by the California Department of Justice.

If you have any questions, please call or email Field Operations Support Services, at [REDACTED TEXT]