

## Immigration Violations

### 428.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The immigration status of individuals alone is generally not a matter for police action. It is incumbent upon all employees of this department to make a personal commitment to equal enforcement of the law and equal service to the public regardless of immigration status. Confidence in this commitment will increase the effectiveness of the Department in protecting and serving the entire community.

### 428.2 DEPARTMENT POLICY

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has primary jurisdiction for enforcement of the provisions of Title 8, United States Code dealing with illegal entry.

When assisting ICE at its specific request, or when suspected criminal violations are discovered as a result of inquiry or investigation based on probable cause originating from activities other than the isolated violations of 8 USC § 1304; 8 USC § 1324; 8 USC § 1325 and 8 USC § 1326, this department may assist in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

### 428.3 PROCEDURES FOR IMMIGRATION COMPLAINTS

Persons wishing to report immigration violations should be referred to the local office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The Employer Sanction Unit of ICE has primary jurisdiction for enforcement of Title 8, United States Code.

#### 428.3.1 BASIS FOR CONTACT

Unless immigration status is relevant to another criminal offense or investigation (e.g., harboring, smuggling, terrorism), the fact that an individual is suspected of being an undocumented alien shall not be the sole basis for contact, detention, or arrest.

#### 428.3.2 SWEEPS

The Sierra County Sheriff's Office does not independently conduct sweeps or other concentrated efforts to detain suspected undocumented aliens.

When enforcement efforts are increased in a particular area, equal consideration should be given to all suspected violations and not just those affecting a particular race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status or other group.

The disposition of each contact (e.g., warning, citation, arrest), while discretionary in each case, should not be affected by such factors as race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or socioeconomic status.

#### 428.3.3 ICE REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

If a specific request is made by ICE or any other federal agency, this department will provide available support services, such as traffic control or peacekeeping efforts, during the federal operation.

Members of this department should not participate in such federal operations as part of any detention team unless it is in direct response to a request for assistance on a temporary

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basis or for officer safety. Any detention by a member of this department should be based upon the reasonable belief that an individual is involved in criminal activity.

#### **428.3.4 IDENTIFICATION**

Whenever any individual is reasonably suspected of a criminal violation (infraction, misdemeanor or felony), the investigating deputy should take reasonable steps to determine the person's identity through valid identification or other reliable sources.

If an individual would have otherwise been released for an infraction or misdemeanor on a citation, the person should be taken to the station and given a reasonable opportunity to verify his/her true identity (e.g., telephone calls). If the person's identity is thereafter reasonably established, the original citation release should be completed without consideration of immigration status.

#### **428.3.5 ARREST**

If the deputy intends to take enforcement action and the individual is unable to reasonably establish his/her true identity, the deputy may take the person into custody on the suspected criminal violation (see Vehicle Code § 40302(a) and Penal Code § 836, if pertinent to the circumstances). A field supervisor shall approve all such arrests.

#### **428.3.6 BOOKING**

If the deputy is unable to reasonably establish an arrestee's identity, the individual may, upon approval of a supervisor, be booked into jail for the suspected criminal violation and held for bail.

A person detained exclusively pursuant to the authority of Vehicle Code § 40302(a) for any Vehicle Code infraction or misdemeanor shall not be detained beyond two hours for the purpose of establishing his/her true identity. Regardless of the status of that person's identity at the expiration of two hours, he/she shall be released on his/her signature with a promise to appear in court for the Vehicle Code infraction or misdemeanor involved.

#### **428.3.7 NOTIFICATION OF IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT**

Whenever a deputy has reason to believe that any person arrested for any offense listed in Health & Safety Code §11369 or any other felony may not be a citizen of the United States and the individual is not going to be booked into county jail, the arresting deputy shall cause ICE to be notified for consideration of an immigration hold.

If a deputy has an articulable belief that an individual taken into custody for any misdemeanor is an undocumented alien, and after he/she is formally booked there is no intention to transport to the county jail, ICE may be informed by the arresting deputy so that ICE may consider placing an immigration hold on the individual.

In making the determination whether to notify ICE in such circumstances, the deputy should, in consultation with a supervisor, consider the totality of circumstances of each case, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Seriousness of the offense
- (b) Community safety
- (c) Potential burden on ICE
- (d) Impact on the immigrant community

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Generally, deputies will not need to notify ICE when booking arrestees at the county jail. Immigration officials routinely interview suspected undocumented aliens who are booked into the county jail on criminal charges and notification will be handled according to jail operation procedures.

#### **428.4 CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO REPORTING TO ICE**

The Sierra County Sheriff's Office is concerned for the safety of local citizens and thus detection of criminal behavior is of primary interest in dealing with any person. The decision to arrest shall be based upon those factors which establish probable cause and not on arbitrary aspects. Race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and socioeconomic status alone are of no bearing on the decision to arrest.

All individuals, regardless of their immigration status, must feel secure that contacting law enforcement will not make them vulnerable to deportation. Members should not attempt to determine the immigration status of crime victims and witnesses or take enforcement action against them absent exigent circumstances or reasonable cause to believe that a crime victim or witness is involved in violating criminal laws. Generally, if a deputy suspects that a victim or witness is an undocumented immigrant, the deputy need not report the person to ICE unless circumstances indicate such reporting is reasonably necessary.

Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict deputies from exchanging legitimate law enforcement information with any other federal, state or local government entity (8 USC § 1373; 8 USC § 1644).

#### **428.4.1 U-VISA/T-VISA NONIMMIGRANT STATUS**

Under certain circumstances, federal law allows temporary immigration benefits to victims and witnesses of certain qualifying crimes (8 USC § 1101(a)(15)(U); 8 USC § 1101(a)(15)(T)). A declaration/certification for a U-Visa/T-Visa from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services may be completed on the appropriate U.S. DHS Form supplements (I-918 or I-914) by law enforcement and must include information on how the individual can assist in a criminal investigation or prosecution in order for a U-Visa/T-Visa to be issued.

Any request for assistance in applying for U-Visa/T-Visa status should be forwarded in a timely manner to the Patrol sergeant assigned to supervise the handling of any related case. The Patrol sergeant should do the following:

- (a) Consult with the assigned Deputy to determine the current status of any related case and whether further documentation is warranted.
- (b) Review the instructions for completing the declaration/certification if necessary. Instructions for completing Forms I-918/I-914 can be found on the U.S. DHS website.
- (c) Contact the appropriate prosecutor assigned to the case, if applicable, to ensure the declaration/certification has not already been completed and whether a declaration/certification is warranted.
- (d) Address the request and complete the declaration/certification, if appropriate, in a timely manner.
- (e) Ensure that any decision to complete or not complete the form is documented in the case file and forwarded to the appropriate prosecutor. Include a copy of any completed declaration/certification in the case file.

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#### **428.4.2 HUMAN TRAFFICKING T-VISA**

Deputies and their supervisors who are assigned to investigate a case of human trafficking shall complete the above process and documents needed for a T-Visa application within 15 business days of the first encounter with the victim, whether or not it is requested by the victim (Penal Code § 236.5).