

Analysis of ICE Detainer Guidance

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U.S. Immigration
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Enforcement

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MEMORANDUM FOR: All Field Office Directors
All Special Agents in Charge
All Chief Counsel

FROM: John Morton
Director

SUBJECT: Civil Immigration Enforcement: Guidance on the Use of Detainers
in the Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Criminal Justice Systems

Purpose

This memorandum provides guidance on the use of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers in the federal, state, local, and tribal criminal justice systems. This guidance applies to all uses of ICE detainers regardless of whether the contemplated use arises out of the Criminal Alien Program, Secure Communities, a 287(g) agreement, or any other ICE enforcement effort. This guidance does not govern the use of detainers by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). This guidance replaces Sections 4.2 and 4.5 of the August 2010 *Interim Guidance on Detainers* (Policy Number 10074.1) and otherwise supplements the remaining sections of that same guidance.

Doesn't explain how public can report and address violations of this guidance.

Background

In the memorandum entitled *Civil Immigration Enforcement: Priorities for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Aliens*, issued in June 2010,¹ ICE set forth clear priorities that guide its civil immigration enforcement. These priorities ensure that ICE's finite enforcement resources are dedicated, to the greatest extent possible, to individuals whose removal promotes public safety, national security, border security, and the integrity of the immigration system.

As ICE's implementation of these priorities continues, it is of critical importance that ICE remain focused on ensuring that the priorities are uniformly, transparently, and effectively pursued. To that end, ICE issues the following guidance governing the use of detainers in the nation's criminal justice system at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels. This guidance will ensure that the agency's use of detainers in the criminal justice system uniformly applies the

Despite this June 2010 memo, ICE has not reduced or significantly changed its deportation practices. On Dec. 21, 2012, ICE announced that it has deported [409,849](#) individuals – a record-breaking number. Prosecutorial discretion also has only been granted in a [small fraction](#) of cases.

¹ As amended and updated by the memorandum of the same title issued March 2, 2011.

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principles set forth in the June 2010 memorandum and is consistent with the agency's enforcement priorities.

National Detainer Guidance

Consistent with ICE's civil enforcement priorities and absent extraordinary circumstances, ICE agents and officers should issue a detainer in the federal, state, local, or tribal criminal justice systems against an individual only where (1) they have reason to believe the individual is an alien subject to removal from the United States and (2) one or more of the following conditions apply:

- the individual has a prior felony conviction or has been charged with a felony offense;
- the individual has three or more prior misdemeanor convictions;²
- the individual has a prior misdemeanor conviction or has been charged with a misdemeanor offense if the misdemeanor conviction or pending charge involves:
 - violence, threats, or assault;
 - sexual abuse or exploitation;
 - driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance;
 - unlawful flight from the scene of an accident;
 - unlawful possession or use of a firearm or other deadly weapon;
 - the distribution or trafficking of a controlled substance; or
 - other significant threat to public safety;³
- the individual has been convicted of illegal entry pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1325;
- the individual has illegally re-entered the country after a previous removal or return;
- the individual has an outstanding order of removal;
- the individual has been found by an immigration officer or an immigration judge to have knowingly committed immigration fraud; or
- the individual otherwise poses a significant risk to national security, border security, or public safety.⁴

The use of "should" rather than "shall" means that this is discretionary, not mandatory.

Nothing put in place to ensure U.S. Citizens as well as persons with legal status who are not deportable are not detained and deported.

No specific list of crimes provided. Just a listing of general categories. Hard to administer and can be broadly interpreted.

Individuals charged, but who are innocent of those offenses or who are overcharged, will still be subject to ICE holds and deported. This can occur prior to receiving due process in criminal court.

Also, no mechanism for honoring release determinations (e.g., bail) by local criminal court judges who have determined that person is not a danger or flight risk.

No time limit on how long ago misdemeanor convictions occurred. Also, not clear if can be from one incident, or if have to be from three separate incidents.

² Given limited enforcement resources, three or more convictions for minor traffic misdemeanors or other relatively minor misdemeanors alone should not trigger a detainer unless the convictions reflect a clear and continuing danger to others or disregard for the law.

³ A significant threat to public safety is one which poses a significant risk of harm or injury to a person or property.

⁴ For example, the individual is a suspected terrorist, a known gang member, or the subject of an outstanding felony arrest warrant; or the detainer is issued in furtherance of an ongoing felony criminal or national security investigation.

Gang databases are notoriously inaccurate. Under this policy anyone who is suspected or profiled to be a gang member may be held by ICE for deportation--even if they have no prior criminal or immigration history.

Most problematic exception because it swallows the rule. These exceptions allow individuals to be detained and deported under S-Comm for purely civil immigration violations. S-Comm was supposed to focus on serious or violent felony convictions, not immigration violations. This continues to entangle local police with immigration enforcement and undercuts community policing.

Revised Detainer Form

To ensure consistent application of this guidance, ICE will revise the DHS detainer form, Form I-247. The revised detainer form, which should be used in all cases once it is issued, will specifically list the grounds above and require the issuing officer or agent to identify those that apply so that the receiving agency and alien will know the specific basis for the detainer. The changes to the form will make it easy for officers and agents to document the immigration enforcement priorities and prosecutorial discretion analysis they have completed leading to the issuance of the detainer.

Many local law enforcement are not even giving the ICE detainer form to individuals in local custody despite guidance by ICE to that effect a year ago. How is ICE going to ensure that the detainer form is going to be given to the detainee?

Prosecutorial Discretion

This guidance identifies those removable aliens in the federal, state, local, and tribal criminal justice systems for whom a detainer may be considered. It does not require a detainer in each case, and all ICE officers, agents, and attorneys should continue to evaluate the merits of each case based on the June 2011 memorandum entitled *Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion Consistent with the Civil Immigration Enforcement Priorities of the Agency for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Aliens* and other applicable agency policies.

Not clear how public, local law enforcement, and state governments will be involved in holding ICE accountable in 6 month review.

Six-Month Review

ICE Field Office Directors, Chief Counsel, and Special Agents in Charge should closely evaluate the implementation and effect of this guidance in their respective jurisdictions for a period of six months from the date of this memorandum. Based on the results of this evaluation, ICE will consider whether modifications, if any, are needed.

Disclaimer

This guidance does not create or confer any right or benefit on any person or party, public or private. Nothing in this guidance should be construed to limit ICE's power to apprehend, charge, detain, administratively prosecute, or remove any alien unlawfully in the United States or to limit the legal authority of ICE or its personnel to enforce federal immigration law. Similarly, this guidance, which may be modified, superseded, or rescinded at any time, is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil, or criminal matter.

Guidance can be changed at any time, and is not mandatory.

This guidance does not cover or control those detainers issued by officers and agents of CBP. Detainers issued by CBP officers and agents shall remain governed by existing CBP policy, and nothing in this guidance is intended to limit CBP's power to apprehend, charge, detain, or remove any alien unlawfully in the United States.

Guidance doesn't apply to Customs and Border Protection