



Training Bulletin

SANTA BARBARA POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Responding to Incidents Involving Federal Immigration Enforcement Actions

The purpose of this training bulletin is to provide guidance to SBPD personnel when handling incidents and calls for service, such as alleged kidnappings or other disturbances, which may ultimately be identified as federal immigration enforcement actions. It is important to note that SBPD personnel cannot interfere with a federal investigation or enforcement action, including detention or arrest. Federal statutes prohibit interference with federal investigations, enforcement actions, or arrests (18 U.S.C. § 111)

Because of our limitations in these situations due to Federal Law, the guiding principles are to maintain peace, ensure the safety of all parties, and provide clear communication to reduce community confusion and fear.

Background

Local law enforcement throughout the state has received reports of community concern related to the presence of federal law enforcement agents. In some cases, federal agents have reportedly refused to identify themselves, resulting in confusion, calls for service, and tensions between the community and law enforcement. When responding to such calls, SBPD officers are expected to remain professional and ensure our role is consistent and centered on maintaining public peace and safety. Below provides details regarding the responsibilities of responding officers and supervisor(s).

Officer's Responsibilities

When responding to calls for service involving potential federal enforcement actions, officers shall:

- Immediately request a supervisor to respond for "possible federal enforcement action" if one has not already been dispatched.
- When encountering individuals engaged in apparent enforcement actions **who are not readily identifiable as local, state, or federal law enforcement** personnel, verify the credentials of the on-scene supervisor or federal agent in charge and ensure that this verification is captured on body-worn video.

Note: If the individuals are uncooperative, officers should document all available information, including the number of personnel, descriptions of individuals, visible agency markings, and vehicle descriptions. The officer shall immediately notify and relay this information to the responding supervisor.

- Once it is determined that the incident is a federal enforcement action, the role of the SBPD officer(s) on-scene is strictly limited to the following core functions:
 - **Maintaining Public and Officer Safety:** This remains the primary objective. Officers shall continue to ensure tactical separation ***and take only those actions necessary to safeguard lives and property.*** This may include maintaining a safe perimeter or directing traffic to ensure public safety.
 - **De-escalating Tensions:** Officers should act to maintain the peace by de-escalating potential conflicts with members of the public.
 - **Communicating with the Community:** Officers should provide clear communication to bystanders, reassuring them of the SBPD's role to ensure public safety, not to assist with civil immigration enforcement actions.
- Take appropriate crime report(s), if necessary.
- Tag all body-worn video with the appropriate case number/CAD GO number.

Supervisor's Responsibilities

To ensure proper oversight and adherence to SBPD policies involving federal immigration enforcement actions, supervisors shall:

- Respond to calls for service, including alleged in-progress kidnapping and possible kidnapping, to which they are dispatched pursuant to this bulletin.
- Attempt to verify the credentials of the on-scene supervisor or federal agent-in-charge.
- Ensure officers adhere to Department policies regarding federal immigration enforcement actions while maintaining public safety.
- Notify the watch commander and provide all relevant information.

Dispatch Responsibilities

Dispatch personnel shall:

- Dispatch a supervisor to any calls for service that include indicators suggesting possible federal enforcement action; and,
- Dispatch a supervisor to all alleged in-progress kidnapping-related calls for service.