

# Documenting and Responding to ICE



@badasscrosstitch

Presented by: States at the Core & Protect RP

# Agenda

1. Check in / share
2. Why respond to ICE
3. Goals of ICE Watch
4. How to do it
5. Staying safe
6. What next?
7. More resources
8. A model for community defense

# Agreements

1. Support the training team to get through to the end!
2. No unauthorized recording
3. Put relevant comments and questions in the chat
4. Speak for yourself, from your own experience
5. Don't incriminate yourself or others

# Share with the group...

What are you feeling for your community or yourself?

Please put your answers in the chat.

**ICIRR**  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

**FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK  
HOTLINE**

*What is the Family Support Network Hotline?*

- ✓ Toll-free hotline offers help to Illinois families facing deportation.
- ✓ The hotline is staffed by trained volunteers who will listen to families and offer referrals to lawyers, social service agencies, pastors, and other community supporters.
- ✓ The hotline is staffed in English, Spanish, Polish, Arabic and Korean.



**1-855-435-7693**

**ACTION** →

REPORT ANY ICE ACTIVITY TO THE HOTLINE  
BECOME A COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR!



@badasscrossstitch

# Why are immigrant communities being targeted so aggressively?

- Immigrants and other marginalized groups of people are caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous escalation of authoritarianism.
- Vulnerable people are easy scapegoats for those who would like to stoke fear and division in America.
- Authoritarians have and will persistently leverage disinformation on crime and the border to justify their attacks.
- Scapegoating a group of people that are already marginalized is a characteristic of authoritarian regimes throughout history and around the globe.

# ***Before we get into the nitty gritty...***

Documenting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is legal and protected by the Constitution. See [Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press](#) for state specific info.

You have the right to record or film public officials including law enforcement (ICE, police officers, sheriffs, etc) in public and on your property.

**Without a warrant, law enforcement may not confiscate or demand to see your digital content!**

Remember, just because you HAVE rights doesn't mean they will be respected. Know your rights before you begin watching. <https://www.nlg.org/know-your-rights/>

## **What is ICE / MigraWatch?**

ICE or Migra Watch was adapted from CopWatch training that originated with the Black Panther Party in the 1960s and was utilized again in the 1990s and beyond. In 2017 People's Response Team and OCAD adapted Copwatch training for what we refer to in this training as ICE Watch.

ICE Watch is not about interfering.

### **We focus on documentation and response because:**

1. It's an effective way to get assistance to our neighbors in crisis.
2. We are grappling with a new era of ICE enforcement.
3. We believe that we are all safer when we stick together.

# #GOALS

We do this to protect our neighborhoods from immigration enforcement by ensuring our community members know their rights and have a plan, AND to deter misconduct or aggressive activity by ICE agents.

**DOCUMENT:** To get a better understanding of tactics.

**SUPPORT:** Community members who are being targeted.

**DE-ESCALATE:** To stop violence against neighbors from any law enforcement agency.

**We are sharing our experiences and the training we have received from others over the years. We are not lawyers. We rely on the collective knowledge of our community to provide guidance in training for ICE Watch.**

# What if you're the first to see something?

## SALUTE

- ❑ **S** Size/Strength: *5 to 6 armed agents*
- ❑ **A** Actions/Activities: *Waiting outside of a marked Homeland Security van*
- ❑ **L** Location: *At the corner of Central & Main streets, east side of the street*
- ❑ **U** Uniform: *Wearing vests that say POLICE ICE on the back*
- ❑ **T** Time & Date of Observation: *January 21st and 12:05 PM*
- ❑ **E** Equipment and weapons: *They have body armor and pepper spray*

False alarms and rumors can be harmful because they exhaust responders – get as much information as quickly as possible, confirmed with photos of the operation or asking the suspected officials if they are ICE.

(credit: NYC ICE Watch)



# What should you look for?

## How many agents are on the scene?

Anywhere from **two, four or six agents** for local operations targeting individuals in residential neighborhoods. More agents for workplace raids **(6-10)**. Major shows of force could include dozens of agents but unlikely to see this in residential operations.

## Are they in riot gear?

ICE doing typical operations in a residential area may not be in fatigues or tactical gear - may be more equipped like plainclothes police. If you encounter ICE Special Response Teams, you may see Bear Cat tracked vehicles, long guns and tactical vests.

## Are they in clothing or uniforms?

Look for agents in tactical gear, fatigues, jeans, khakis or cargo pants. NOT uniformed municipal officers unless you are in a jurisdiction with a 287(g) agreement.



# What should you look for?

## What do agents' vests say:

You may see vests that say **POLICE ICE**, **POLICE HSI**, or **ERO** but they may have on jackets that just say POLICE. Increasingly they wear **no identifying markers**. Also note that other law enforcement agencies have been deputized throughout the country to participate in immigration enforcement.

## What vehicles and plates to look for:

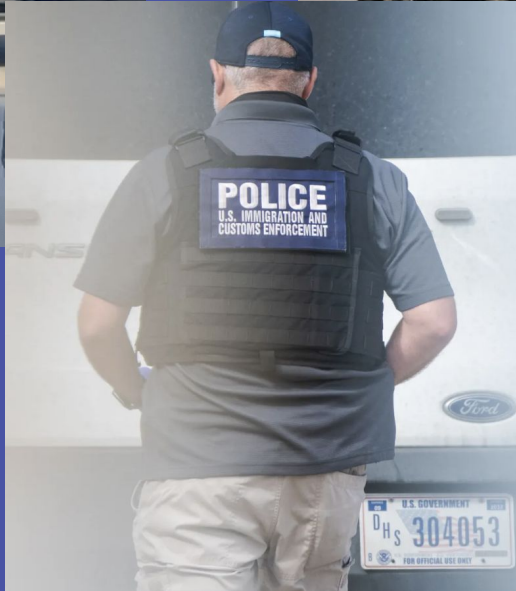
Unmarked cars with dark tint & no plates. Common models: Ford Explorer, Chevy Tahoe, Dodge Charger. Always at least one agent inside.

They may be driving minivans or SUVs with government plates, but more increasingly with pedestrian plates. Look for local or out-of-state plates. If you are in a sanctuary city, you shouldn't see municipal plates.

# What do agents look like?



Federal agents force people back as they detain several people at the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program office, 2245 S. Michigan Ave., in South Loop on June 4, 2025. Credit: Sebastián Hidalgo for Block Club Chicago







# What are they driving?



Federal immigration enforcement agents leave the ICE facility in Broadview in a black Chevrolet Express van with no visible license plates in the front or back on Oct. 2, 2025. | Ashlee Rezin/Sun-Times



# What is new?

- **Large shows of armed force, with multiple agencies, meant to intimidate**
  - South Shore Raid, Millenium Park show of force, response to downtown LA protests, MacArthur Park, DC deployment of Nat'l Guard
- **Masked, armed agents** surprise-arresting people, identifying themselves as ICE or not:
  - Traffic stops, pedestrians, workers, and activist targets.
- Sweeping up anyone in the area of an immigration operation, not just the target.
- Targeting of previously 'safe' areas
  - schools, daycares, churches, courts, markets
- Aggressive surveillance, arrest and prosecution of non-violent protesters

# Who else might you see...

The Department of Homeland Security is allowing certain law enforcement components from the Department of Justice to carry out the "functions" of an immigration officer.

Agencies you may see involved in immigration operations include:

- Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF)
- US Marshals Service
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons



The administration has also begun using the National Guard and Marines in immigration-enforcement activities, including in "night operations and rural interdiction," as well as "guard duty and riot control" inside and around detention facilities. They may also be used to transport detainees and assist in locating "fugitives."



## ICE's 287(g) Program allows state and local agencies to act as immigration enforcement agents.

ICE operates three 287(g) models:

- The **Jail Enforcement Model** (JEM) targets people already in custody. Local law enforcement can question people arrested under local or state charges about their immigration status. These officers may also hold non-citizens in jail for up to 48 hours under ICE's request.
- The **Warrant Service Officer** (WSO) program allows ICE to train, certify and authorize state and local law enforcement officers to serve and execute administrative warrants in their agency's jail.
- The **Task Force Model** (TFM) serves as a force multiplier, allowing state and local law enforcement agencies to enforce limited immigration authority with ICE oversight during their routine duties, such as traffic stops. This is the most dangerous and invasive form of the program.

\*As of October 9, 2025, ICE has signed 1,035 Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) for 287(g) programs covering 40 states. These include JEM agreements with 132 law enforcement agencies in 28 states, WSO agreements with 381 law enforcement agencies in 35 states, and TFM agreements with 522 agencies in 35 states.

Check to see if your local law enforcement has a 287(g) agreement in effect:

<https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g>

# What to do after SALUTE:

- ❑ I have a neighborhood ICE Watch group:

Once you have gathered SALUTE info, send all information to your group (it is great to have at least three people on scene - more on the next slide). Ask others to help confirm the sighting, get folks to the scene, and provide guidance to targeted neighbors.

**THEN**, communicate with an immigrant rights hotline: In Illinois, that is the ICIRR hotline: 1-855-HELP-MY-FAMILY (1-855-435-7693)

- ❑ I do not have a neighborhood ICE Watch group but **DO** have a hotline:

Immediately call and provide all SALUTE info to your immigrant rights or rapid response hotline.

- ❑ I do not have a neighborhood ICE Watch group **OR** an immigrant rights hotline: Google immigration or ICE hotline + your town/city/state, more are popping up each day.



Use



Signal

for Digital Security

**1. First, download the Signal app to your smartphone.**

**2. Initial Setup:** Verify phone number and name. You will then be at a screen that says "Chats" at the top.

**3. Setup Username:**

- Click on the circle in the left hand corner that has your initials in it.
- Click "Settings."
- Click your name and number at the top to reach Profile.
- You will see a box that says "Username." Click that box, then click "Set Up Your Username" and follow instructions from there.
- If you'd like to watch a video on how to set this up, click [here](#).

# If you are working with a group

Coordinate and connect with a hub of others who are ICE watching. For example, Protect RP set up a response alert Signal group for roughly 500 neighbors who have been trained. Other neighborhoods are doing the same. Some groups are 10 people or less. **YOU can do this with just a handful of neighbors.**

If possible, work in three. Communication is key!

Priority 1: Recorder

Priority 2: Engager

Priority 3: Monitor



# RECORDER

## DO:

- ☐ Record the raid all the way through.
- ☐ Use audio and narrate what you're seeing
  - ☐ Note the date and time.
  - ☐ Note the location.
  - ☐ Note license plate numbers, model of car, and other identifiable information.
- ☐ Capture landmarks, street signs
- ☐ Describe what you're recording as it may not be readily obvious
- ☐ Practice!

## DON'T:

- ☐ Focus on the person or people they are detaining.
- ☐ Start and stop the recording - this is for continuity and evidence

# ENGAGER

## DO:

- ❑ Stay near the person recording.
- ❑ Try to shout out vital **Know Your Rights** info.
- ❑ Ask for name, date of birth, and a phone number so that family members can be alerted of the ICE detention.
- ❑ Note ways to decrease risk of physical violence.
- ❑ Try to shout out a phone number where they can get legal support:  
**e.g. the ICIRR Family Support Hotline is (855) 435-7693**

## DON'T:

- ❑ Engage with ICE agents or interfere (even if you witness violence)

# MONITOR

## DO:

- ☐ Take note of everything that is happening
- ☐ Write down names of people being detained and their DOBs, if possible.
- ☐ Write down any phone numbers the person may be able to provide to contact their family.
- ☐ Any information about ICE agents: how many present, names, badge numbers, weapons they are carrying or using, vehicle descriptions, license plates.
- ☐ Monitor what bystanders are doing - help direct people to engage safely.

## DON'T:

- ☐ Interfere in any way.
- ☐ Share any of this info publicly until you have more guidance.

# Wallet-Sized Know Your Rights Cards to Download and Print

- [Arabic](#)
- [Chinese](#)
- [French](#)
- [Haitian Creole](#)
- [Hindi](#)
- [Korean](#)
- [Polish](#)
- [Quechua](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Ukrainian](#)
- [Urdu](#)
- [Vietnamese](#)

**Digital KYR card:** [bit.ly/ICIRRCards](https://bit.ly/ICIRRCards)

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ILLINOIS COALITION  
FOR IMMIGRANT  
& REFUGEE RIGHTS

**SIGN UP  
& TAKE ACTION**



## Call the Family Support Hotline

# (855) 435-7693

### (855) Help-My-Family

Deportation Legal Support  
Report ICE Activity  
Get Legal & Social Service Referrals

 Languages Available | Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Polish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Quechua, Ukrainian, Russian and Hindi

*(Keep this portion in your wallet and hand it out when you're detained)*

#### Rights Card

- I am giving you this card because I do not wish to speak to you or have any further contact with you.
- I wish to exercise my right to remain silent and to refuse to answer any questions.
- If you arrest me, I will continue to exercise my right to remain silent and to refuse to answer your questions.
- I want to speak with a lawyer before answering your questions.
- I do not consent to your entry or search.
- I will not sign any document I do not understand

I would like to contact this attorney or organization:

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## THINK BEFORE SHARING

**Pause before you share publicly** or start livestreaming. Determine if you need to protect anyone's identity, including your own.

If posting online, be aware of what information the platform is collecting. For example, cellphones often capture GPS coordinates in the video's metadata. If this information is uploaded with the video, it could be used to trace the footage back to you.



## PRESERVE YOUR MEDIA

**Save the original file** in a safe place. Never delete the original file or change the filename.

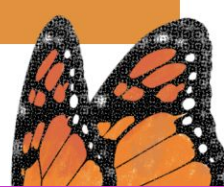
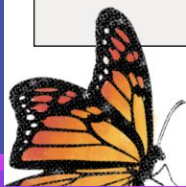
If you do edit, do it from a copy. Refer to our [archiving decision tree](#) for more key points.



## LIVESTREAMING

**WITNESS does NOT recommend sharing footage on social media or livestreaming without consent from the person involved and/or direct representatives including lawyers or family members.**

- Livestreaming can expose people's identities and other sensitive information far more easily than recorded video, but **sharing any videos online – live or not – is risky.**
- Consider streaming to a **trusted set of viewers**, such as an attorney or legal observers on a private channel.
- It can be helpful to describe what's happening or recap what happened through factual commentary.
- **Work with a partner** to keep an eye on what's happening in the periphery and to check viewers' comments and questions.
- While some sites may let you save the video on their platform, others delete the video after a set time period. If you think your video contains evidentiary content, it's good to **download and preserve a copy** on your secure devices.



# Safety and Security: De-Escalation Strategies

## Distance and actions

- Stay 10 feet or more away - make sure they have to walk towards you and you have distance to walk away
- Hands up and empty - repeated statements about rights and non-aggressive behavior
- Regardless of what you're thinking - no name calling or aggressive verbal behavior



## Questions:

What safety issues could arise?

Do you have any tips to share?

## A few notes on interactions:

People should always ask “Am I free to go?” if ICE is attempting to detain them.

Legally, if ICE does not have a warrant, they should let the person go. If you are observing, try to tell the person being detained that they should ask this question. Then, try to get their name and a phone number for a family member.

If you are observing an activity and ICE asks to see your ID, you do **NOT** need to show them ID.

Ask, “Am I being detained?” and if the answer is no, you can walk away.



# Script that might help

If officers tell you to get back, take a step back and verbalize:

*“I’m cooperating. I’m taking a step back. I’m not interfering. I’m just exercising my legal right to observe.”*

To person being detained:

*“Please tell me your name and date of birth. Is there a family member’s phone number so we can get help to you?”*

If law enforcement continues to tell you to get back, continue to take one step back while repeating this. You have the right to observe as long as you are not interfering with law enforcement activity. Turn your camera to the ground to document yourself moving back.

# What should be in your go-bag:

- Video Camera / Phone Camera
- State or government ID

## What is helpful to have:

- Whistles / noisemakers
- Neighborhood Map
- Flashlight (phone is fine)
- Know Your Rights Cards
- Extra battery/phone charger
- Flyers and tape

## What should you *never* bring to verify a raid:

- Illegal (or any non prescription) drugs
- Open containers of alcohol or anything that is illegal to transport
- Weapons

## ✓ Safety and Security Checklist (Community Action)

- ❑ Ask a friend to be your emergency contact and share important information with them like your medications, or what they should do if they haven't heard from you by a certain time.
- ❑ Bring a buddy and make a plan of where to meet if you get separated.
- ❑ Keep your essential items (like phone and medicine) close by. Park close to the site, if possible.
- ❑ Review your rights [Know Your Risks \(KYRs\) - National Lawyers Guild](#)
- ❑ Know your own boundaries
- ❑ Review de-escalation tactics to use purposeful actions, verbal communication, and body language to calm the situation.

# ✓ Digital Safety and Security Checklist

- ❑ Clear enough memory on your phone to have storage space for recording!
- ❑ Keep your phone charged and extra battery packs with you if possible.
- ❑ Use encrypted communication. **Install Signal** (encrypted end-to-end) on your mobile devices.
- ❑ Protect yourself from your devices.
  - ❑ Enable lock screen password (all devices).
  - ❑ Turn off face/fingerprint recognition
  - ❑ Turning off location
  - ❑ Make sure Signal messages and texts do NOT appear on your lockscreen
- ❑ Practice better password habits: Every password should be unique between devices and platforms. A digital document with all your passwords is not secure!

## ✓ Legal & Rights Resources

**To Report Police & National Guard Misconduct:** Free legal representation, community resources, report misconduct

- First Defense Legal Aid Hotline: 1-800-529-7374

**If you are arrested or police custody:** Free legal representation

- Cook County Public Defender's Arrest Response Hotline: 844-817-4448

**If you are arrested at a protest or for political activity:** Free legal representation while in police custody or court

- National Lawyers Guild Chicago Hotline: 872-465-4244

**If you are active military & are uncomfortable with what you're being asked to do:** Confidential and free legal support for military members and families.

- GI Rights Hotline: 877-447-4487



## Additional Resources:

- [Brooklyn Defender Services](#)
- [Eyes on ICE \(WITNESS\)](#)
- [Filming Immigration Enforcement Tip Sheet \(WITNESS\)](#)
- [Considerations for Sharing Videos of Immigration Enforcement \(WITNESS\)](#)
- [Real or Rumor: A guide to verifying online reports of ICE raids \(WITNESS, United We Dream\)](#)
- [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#)
- [Immigrant Defense Project](#)

# A Model for a community defense network

Protect RP was started in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood in early 2017.

The goal has always been organizing neighbors to protect neighbors who are in danger of being targeted by ICE.

**The three main components are:**

- a. Train people to identify ICE incursions
- b. Train people on how to respond in numbers to those incursions. These trainings involve how to organize, how to recruit others, and how to use direct action.
- c. Build a resilient community to resist all authoritarian incursions, whether by ICE or other law enforcement

# A Model for a community defense network

## How do you intentionally build a resilient community?

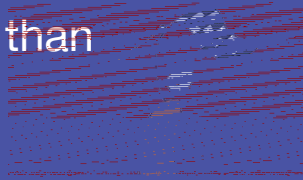
**Be welcoming** - our meetings always involve food, time for reflection, and a democratic spirit. We know that people need community and feeding each other helps build that. We know that there a lot going on and we need time to process. And we know that no single person has every answer but we are stronger as a collective.

**Be creative** - we come together to resist authoritarianism. We do that with our bodies but also our minds. We seek creative ways to engage people, through art, meetings, protests, and direct action. We've also formed parent groups, painted rocks with slogans and left them in public, and made t-shirts. Anything that helps demonstrate resistance.

**Be flexible** - (but clear on the goal) - ICE won't invade our communities every day. We know that we need to respond to all sorts of needs created by authoritarianism. Sometimes that means mutual aid, sometimes that means a book club or a movie night, and sometimes that means responding. We are always clear that ICE watch and ICE response is core to our mission.

# How to start an ICE Watch group - the basics!

- ❑ **Get trained.** You're here already so good work! Make sure you understand how to identify ICE and practice what you'd do if you see them in your community.
- ❑ **Find some friends!** This can be as small as a couple of neighbors that are concerned. Start talking about what worries you, and how you'd like to be there for each other.
- ❑ **Help your friends get trained.** Many ICE Watch networks struggle with false alarms that overwhelm the group, so making sure everyone understands and uses SALUTE is a good place to start.
- ❑ **Download Signal.** An encrypted messaging app, Signal is more secure than WhatsApp, which is owned by Meta.



## How to start an ICE Watch group: basics continued!

- ❑ **Put your newly trained friends to work!** ...on a Signal thread. Designate a few people as verifiers. Some things that make people good verifiers: work from home or around the community a lot, flexible work hours, mobile, and can stay calm in a difficult situation.
- ❑ **Test the system.** When someone in your network has a possible ICE sighting, the verifier/administrators receive the message first. They'll ask for SALUTE information, as well as photos to try and help confirm the sighting.
- ❑ **Establish protocols.** If you're in a place without a larger network, the group of neighbors in your Signal thread are your first resource for support. Can they join you? Can they send friends to join you? Are you in a city like Chicago where you can alert a larger network? Is there a hotline you can call?
- ❑ **Meet (and eat) regularly!**

# Thank you!

## BIG THANKS TO

- All the Rapid Responders who are working hard to protect neighbors!
- ICE Watch & Copwatch trainers everywhere
- You, for engaging in this work!

Donate to Protect through Venmo via Family Matters: @FMChicago1987  
Please put “Protect RP” in the “What’s this for” line.

To support STAC’s work countering  
authoritarianism, including more ICE Watch  
trainings . . . Donate Here



# Questions?

