

Office of the Director

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
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Washington, DC 20536




**U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement**

January 31, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR: Russell Hott  
Acting Executive Associate Director  
Enforcement and Removal Operations

Robert Hammer  
Acting Executive Associate Director  
Homeland Security Investigations

FROM: Caleb Vitello   
Acting Director

SUBJECT: Common Sense Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas

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On January 20, 2025, Acting Secretary Benjamine C. Huffman issued a memorandum titled, *Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas*, superseding and rescinding effective immediately the October 27, 2021, *Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas* memorandum from former Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas. The Acting Secretary's memorandum acknowledges the ability of the Department's law enforcement personnel to apply enforcement discretion to balance a variety of interests, including the degree to which law enforcement actions occur in protected areas.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, the Department will not be issuing bright line rules regarding where immigration laws are permitted to be exercised. Instead, the Acting Secretary authorized the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to issue further guidance to assist law enforcement personnel in exercising appropriate enforcement discretion.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of ICE immigration enforcement action, protected areas include schools (pre-schools through post-secondary, including colleges, universities, and vocational and trade schools); hospitals; churches, synagogues, mosques, or other institutions of worship; and a site during the occurrence of a public demonstration, such as a march, rally, or parade.

I have great faith in the judgment of our law enforcement personnel and, accordingly, charge Assistant Field Office Directors (AFODs) and Assistant Special Agents in Charge (ASACs) with responsibility for making case-by-case determinations regarding whether, where, and when to conduct an immigration enforcement action in or near a protected area. AFODs and ASACs may provide authorization for such actions either verbally or in writing. Before authorizing an immigration enforcement action at a site where a public demonstration is underway, AFODs and ASACs must consult with local Office of the Principal Legal Advisor leadership for guidance on constitutional considerations.

Any further guidance your Directorates develop should be coordinated together and developed in consultation with the ICE Office of Regulatory Affairs and Policy and OPLA to ensure consistency and legal sufficiency.

Disclaimer

This guidance does not, is not intended to, and may not be construed to create or modify any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any person.

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