

Response to Calls of Enforcement Action by Unknown or Masked Individuals

Effective Date: 08/25/2025

Purpose: To guide OPD commissioned members when responding to incidents potentially involving either legitimate federal immigration enforcement or individuals impersonating federal law enforcement. Officers will prioritize safety, peace, compliance with OPD policy, and state and federal law. In particular, officers are expected to be familiar with the Keep Washington Working Act. Officers must assess and determine whether criminal behavior is occurring.

Background: Federal immigration enforcement efforts in the community have raised concerns that individuals may impersonate federal officers to commit crimes. Legitimate federal officers may wear masks, use unmarked vehicles, and use generic gear while refusing to identify themselves, which is behavior that may be easily mimicked. In response to public concerns, 911 calls reporting abductions, disturbances, or suspicious activity may increase, leaving responding officers uncertain of whether they face legitimate officers or impostors.

Scope: This procedure applies to OPD responses where masked individuals are reported, and the legitimacy of their enforcement authority is unclear.

This procedure does not:

- authorize OPD to enforce immigration law; or
- authorize OPD to interfere with verified federal immigration officers.

Responsibility: All OPD Commissioned Members

Materials/Equipment Needed: Body Worn Cameras, Mobile Audio Video Systems, and Report-writing tools/equipment

Procedure:

1. Initial Response

- Respond to any reported suspicious or criminal activity, not to immigration concerns.
- Ensure you are clearly identified as a commissioned officer of the Olympia Police Department (e.g., OPD uniform). In addition, for officer safety, try to verbally confirm your status as an officer when approaching any purported immigration enforcement activity.
- Request an OPD supervisor if one has not already been dispatched.

- Assess and communicate any need for additional officers, as these incidents may require significant resources.
- Apply de-escalation principles with all present parties.

2. Identification, Assessment, and Law Enforcement Presence

- If individuals on scene appear to be engaged in enforcement but are not clearly identified, request credentials from them, a senior member, or a supervisor.
- If verified as federal immigration enforcement, OPD's role is strictly limited to:
 - Ensuring community and officer safety.
 - Taking only those actions necessary to protect individuals from physical harm and property damage.
 - Communicating respectfully with bystanders to clarify OPD's neutral role (that it is unlawful to assist/unlawful to interfere with civil immigration enforcement).
 - Remaining in the area until federal enforcement action has ceased, whenever feasible.
 - Write an incident report that includes the following information:
 - Name of the detained individual (if feasible)
 - Immigration officer's agency and badge or ID number
 - Witness statements
- Tag video evidence in Evidence.com

3. If Criminal Activity is Suspected or Confirmed

- Consistent with department training, policy, and procedures, take appropriate investigative and enforcement action if no legitimate federal enforcement activity is identified.

4. Notifications

- Notify a lieutenant as soon as feasible.