



CITY OF SANTA ANA

Councilmember-Requested Item Report

DATE

May 20, 2025

TOPIC

Transparency and Public Notification of ICE/DHS Courtesy Alerts to Santa Ana Police Department

COUNCILMEMBER-REQUESTED ITEM TITLE

Discuss and Consider Providing Direction to the City Manager to Develop and Implement a Policy Requiring Immediate Disclosure of All ICE Courtesy Notifications Received by the Santa Ana Police Department

DISCUSSION

On May 5, 2025, data-based reporting by journalist Ben Camacho revealed that the Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD) received at least forty-two courtesy alerts from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) between January 20 and April of this year.¹ These notifications informed SAPD that federal immigration agents planned to be active within our city, often during early morning hours.

SAPD did not disclose this information to the public, to the Council, or when asked directly about immigration enforcement activity at the February 4, 2025 Santa Ana City Council meeting. Subsequent meetings involving a similar line of questioning also did not mention any of the notifications, as reported by Voice of OC.² This highlights a transparency gap in regards to ICE's repeated presence in Santa Ana neighborhoods including near residential areas, schools, and places of worship. Such a transparency gap should be addressed, particularly given our city's commitment to protecting and supporting all residents, including immigrant and refugee community members.

Existing California state law, including the California Values Act (SB 54), and local law both heavily limit the extent to which Santa Ana departments and agencies cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. SAPD clarified that it does not participate in or assist with ICE actions and that alerts are received strictly as a matter of officer safety

¹ Ben Camacho, "EXCLUSIVE: Santa Ana Police Department Received Forty-Two Alerts From Immigration Agents And Did Not Tell The Community," *Inadvertent*, May 5, 2025. <https://inadvertent.substack.com/p/sapd-ice-data>

² Hosam Elattar, "Have Santa Ana's Police Chief & City Manager Been Up Front With Residents About ICE Activity?" *Voice of OC*, May 6, 2025. <https://voiceofoc.org/2025/05/has-santa-anas-police-chief-city-manager-been-up-front-with-residents-about-ice-activity/>

and situational awareness. We appreciate this clarification and recognize the importance of keeping SAPD officers informed about potential ICE/DHS actions. At the same time, the public also deserves timely, accurate information about ICE/DHS activity occurring in their neighborhoods, especially when such information may affect residents' sense of security and ability to make informed choices for themselves and their families.

SAPD already maintains the capacity to proactively share weekly data on firearm and narcotics seizures. The Department has no policy directing it to release such data proactively, yet SAPD does so of its own accord. Implementing a similar process for ICE courtesy notifications would be a practical and meaningful step toward ensuring consistent transparency on issues that directly affect community well-being. This proposal aims to strengthen residents' trust in the City of Santa Ana and provide additional transparency and communication regarding important information within the public record that the community should have increased, direct access to.

Therefore, we would like to propose that the City Council direct the City Manager to:

1. Collaborate with the City Attorney and the SAPD Police Chief to develop a policy to immediately notify the Council, the Police Oversight Commission, and the public whenever a courtesy alert is received from ICE/DHS.
 - a. This notice should be made available within 48 hours of receipt.
 - b. The report must include:
 - i. The date and time of the communication
 - ii. The neighborhood or block targeted by ICE/DHS
 - iii. The nature of the federal activity (e.g. custody check-in, warrant service)
 - iv. Any known or stated outcomes, including if SAPD was asked to participate in an any capacity, if applicable
 - v. A redacted copy of the alert (when possible under law)
2. Establish a publicly accessible webpage where these notices will be published in real time, along with information about residents' constitutional rights during interactions with federal immigration enforcement officers. Notices and accompanying information must be available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
3. Instruct the Public Information Officer to publish these notices in real time on City of Santa Ana social media accounts and the SAPD to publish these notices in real time on SAPD social media accounts. Social media posts from the City of Santa Ana and SAPD social media accounts regarding these notices must be accompanied by links to the City of Santa Ana webpage containing information about residents' constitutional rights during interactions with federal immigration enforcement officers.
4. Instruct SAPD to provide an oral report on ICE communications, including courtesy alerts, at each Council and Police Oversight Commission meeting.

5. Report back to the Council within 30 days with a draft policy and timeline for implementation.

The expectation from the people we serve is clear: we must lead with transparency, not secrecy, when it comes to immigration enforcement activity in Santa Ana.

SUBMITTED BY

Councilmember Johnathan Ryan Hernandez and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin Vazquez