

2.13 Staff-Detainee Communication

I. Purpose and Scope

This detention standard enhances security, safety and orderly facility operations by encouraging and requiring informal direct and written contact among staff and detainees, as well as informal supervisory observation of living and working conditions.

This standard also requires the posting of hotline informational posters from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

This detention standard applies to the following types of facilities housing ERO detainees:

- Service Processing Centers (SPCs);
- Contract Detention Facilities (CDFs); and
- State or local government facilities used by ERO through Intergovernmental Service Agreements (IGSAs) to hold detainees for more than 72 hours.

Procedures in italics are specifically required for SPCs, CDFs, and Dedicated IGSA facilities. Non-dedicated IGSA facilities must conform to these procedures or adopt, adapt or establish alternatives, provided they meet or exceed the intent represented by these procedures.

Various terms used in this standard may be defined in standard “7.5 Definitions.”

II. Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this detention standard are as follows (specific requirements are defined in “V. Expected Practices”).

1. Detainees shall have frequent opportunities for informal contact with facility managerial and

supervisory staff and with ICE/ERO Field Office staff.

2. Facility managerial and supervisory staff and ICE/ERO Field Office staff shall directly observe facility operations and conditions of confinement.
3. Detainees shall be able to submit written questions, requests, grievances and concerns to ICE/ERO staff and receive timely responses.
4. Detainees shall be informed how to directly contact DHS/OIG.
5. Detainee telephone serviceability shall be monitored and documented by ICE staff, and any problems shall be reported immediately.
6. The applicable content and procedures in this standard shall be communicated to the detainee in a language or manner the detainee can understand.

All written materials provided to detainees shall generally be translated into Spanish. Where practicable, provisions for written translation shall be made for other significant segments of the population with limited English proficiency.

Oral interpretation or assistance shall be provided to any detainee who speaks another language in which written material has not been translated or who is illiterate.

III. Standards Affected

This detention standard replaces the standard on “Staff-Detainee Communication” dated 12/2/2008.

IV. References

American Correctional Association, *Performance-based Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities*, 4th Edition: 4-ALDF-2A-05, 2A-06, 2A-12, 5A-03.

V. Expected Practices

A. Staff and Detainee Contact

ICE/ERO detainees shall not be restricted from having frequent informal access to and interaction with key facility staff members, as well as key ICE/ERO staff, in a language they can understand. ICE/ERO staff members shall announce their presence when entering a housing unit.

The local supplement to the detainee handbook shall include contact information for the ICE/ERO Field Office and the scheduled hours and days that ICE/ERO staff is available to be contacted by detainees at the facility. The same information shall be posted in the living areas (or “pods”) of the facilities. Posted contact information shall be updated quarterly or more frequently as necessary to reflect changes in ICE/ERO personnel.

B. Written Detainee Requests to Staff

Detainees may submit written questions, requests, grievances or concerns to ICE/ERO staff, using the detainee request form, a local IGSA form, or a sheet of paper.

Facilities must also allow any ICE/ERO detainee dissatisfied with the facility’s response to file a grievance appeal and communicate directly with ICE/ERO.

Such informal written requests are not intended as a substitute for the more formal process specified in standard “6.2 Grievance System.” However, informal written requests may be used to resolve informal grievances, as described in that standard.

To prepare a written request, a detainee may obtain assistance from another detainee, the housing officer, or other facility staff and may, if he/she chooses, seal the request in an envelope that is clearly addressed with name, title, and/or office to which the request is to be forwarded.

Each facility administrator shall:

- Ensure that adequate supplies of detainee requests forms, envelopes and writing implements are available.
- Have written procedures to promptly route and deliver detainee requests to the appropriate ICE/ERO officials by authorized personnel (not detainees) without reading, altering, or delaying such requests.
- Ensure that the standard operating procedures accommodate detainees with special assistance needs based on, for example, disability, illiteracy, or limited use of English. When language services are needed, the facility should use qualified interpretation services when an employee needs to communicate with a limited English proficient person.
- The facility shall provide a secure drop-box for ICE detainees to correspond directly with ICE management. Only ICE personnel shall have access to the drop-box.

1. Response Times

- a. In Facilities with ICE/ERO Onsite Presence
The ICE/ERO staff member receiving the request shall normally respond in person or in writing as soon as possible and practicable, but no later than within three (3) business days of receipt.
- b. In Facilities without ICE/ERO Onsite Presence
Each detainee request shall be forwarded to the ICE/ERO office of jurisdiction within two business days and answered as soon as practicable, in person or in writing, but no later than within three business days of receipt. All dates shall be documented.

2. Record Keeping and File Maintenance

All requests shall be recorded in a logbook (or

electronic logbook) specifically designed for that purpose. At a minimum, the log shall record:

- a. date of receipt;
- b. detainee's name;
- c. detainee's A-number;
- d. detainee's nationality;
- e. name of the staff member who logged the request;
- f. date that the request, with staff response and action, was returned to the detainee;
- g. any other pertinent site-specific information, including detention condition complaints;
- h. specific reasons why the detainee's request is urgent and requires a faster response; and
- i. the date the request was forwarded to ICE/ERO and the date it was returned shall also be recorded.

A copy of each completed detainee request shall be filed in the detainee's detention file and be retained there for three years at minimum. Copies of confidential requests shall be maintained in the A-file.

3. Detainee Handbook

As required by standard "6.1 Detainee Handbook," each facility's handbook (or supplement) shall advise detainees in a language or manner that they understand of the procedures to submit written questions, requests, or concerns to ICE/ERO staff, as well as the availability of assistance to prepare such requests.

C. Monitoring Detainee Telephone Services

Field Office Directors shall ensure that all phones for detainee use are tested at least weekly in accordance with standard "5.6 Telephone Access."

Staff shall report any telephone serviceability problem within 24 hours to the appropriate ICE point of contact.

Staff shall document each serviceability test on a form that has been provided by ERO, and each Field Office shall maintain those forms, organized by month, for three years.

D. OIG Hotline Informational Posters

DHS/OIG periodically revises a "DHS OIG Hotline" poster which is to be posted in facilities that house ICE/ERO detainees.

1. The chief of the Detention Standards Compliance Unit in the ERO headquarters Detention Management Division is designated as the contact point for coordination with OIG and is responsible for distribution of hotline posters to Field Office Directors.
2. Field Office Directors shall distribute sufficient numbers of the posters to all facilities that house ICE/ERO detainees. Each Field Office shall maintain a master copy from which additional copies may be duplicated as needed.
3. The facility administrator shall ensure that posters are mounted in every housing unit and in appropriate common areas (e.g., recreation areas, dining areas, processing areas).
4. During staff-detainee communication visits, ICE/ERO staff shall verify the presence of posters at designated locations and shall ensure that any missing or destroyed posters are replaced as soon as possible.