

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Very often I am asked about how law enforcement deal with illegal immigration. Dodge County is not unique in this area. We host several businesses that employ seasonal help and it is fair to say we do run across people that are not here in a legal status. Other official classifications include foreign born nationals or foreign born inmates. The majority of our contact with the illegal population is for traffic violations. With so few operating with valid drivers licenses it becomes very frustrating. This is compounded with a lack of bi-lingual staff to assist in communicating with these drivers and their passengers. For traffic violations there is little we can do other than issue the citations. Few will show up in court or pay the fine and the case turns into warrants that go unpaid.

Criminal matters are a little different. Should we have criminal contact with someone that may be here illegally, this information is shared with the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement Office (ICE). This occurs when the suspect is booked into our facility. We provide the name given and nature of offense and it is up to ICE to determine if a deportation hold will be placed. This is routine for those who commit violent crimes and serious felonies.

Dodge County enjoys a great relationship with ICE as we are a contract facility for these holds. The staffs in our detention facility know the agents from ICE on a first name basis. We also have an ICE agent that spends one day a week in our facility speaking with those we are holding for them. Many of you have asked when the Sheriff's Dept. or local law enforcement is going to step up enforcement of immigration violations? Another question is whether we are going to pass local ordinances or other laws similar to other jurisdictions around the country, attempting to control the population of illegal or foreign born nationals?

We do not condone those that are here illegally. We do not condone those who employ those that are here illegally. Do we have the authority to enforce such violations? Yes we do. Is the issue severe enough in Dodge County that we need to conduct an all out assault on the problem? No it is not. We will continue to work with our federal partners to ensure those that are a risk to our county are locked up and referred to ICE. We will also pursue and conduct investigations into those who may be aiding illegals by providing transporting, housing, or false documents.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Department is committed to the enforcement of all laws and the apprehension of those who violate these laws. Our enforcement standard is the same regardless of whether or not you are an American citizen, illegal alien, or a foreign born national. To think that a routine contact with an illegal alien will lead to incarceration and deportation is unrealistic. Should an illegal alien commit a serious felony, you can be assured this person will be arrested, charged, convicted, and serve their time in a state institution. Upon release, he/she will then be processed for deportation. Dodge County has not had many cases like this.

As Washington continues to debate what immigration reform should look like, we will continue to do what we can with the resources we have. We will aggressively pursue those who commit serious crimes/felonies and work closely with ICE to ensure they stay locked up until deportation. Thanks for listening tnehl@co.dodge.wi.us