



Home Office

**Immigration Removals, Enforcement and Detention  
General instructions**

# **Operational planning and briefing**

Version v1.0

# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Contents.....   | 2  |
| About this guidance.....  | 4  |
| Contacts .....  | 4  |
| Clearance and publication .....   | 4  |
| Changes from last version of this guidance .....                        | 4  |
| Intelligence led operations.....  | 5  |
| The tier system of investigation and operations .....                   | 6  |
| Lower tier.....   | 6  |
| Middle tier .....   | 6  |
| Upper tier or major operations .....                                    | 7  |
| Operational names .....   | 8  |
| Tasking, authorisation and constraints .....                            | 9  |
| Tasking .....   | 9  |
| Record of authority .....   | 9  |
| Authorisation: out of hours visits .....                                | 9  |
| Authority for visit not given.....                                      | 10 |
| Pre-visit surveillance .....  | 11 |
| Surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.....      | 11 |
| Pre-visit checks: logging proposed visits.....                          | 13 |
| Mandatory checks.....   | 13 |
| Return visits to addresses .....  | 14 |
| Requesting data from the Police National Computer (PNC) .....           | 15 |
| Right to rent: pre visit checks.....                                    | 16 |
| Logging proposed visits: national operations database .....             | 16 |
| Operational planning: people at risk.....                               | 17 |
| People at risk: detention assessment .....                              | 17 |
| Section 55: safeguarding children.....                                  | 17 |
| Clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE).....                   | 17 |
| Method of entry .....   | 18 |
| Personal effects and baggage .....                                      | 18 |
| Educational exams.....  | 19 |
| Disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks and training for staff..... | 19 |
| Last minute claims to be part of a family with children .....           | 20 |
| Requesting police assistance.....                                       | 21 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Operation notification form (ONF).....  | 21 |
| Completing the ONF .....  | 21 |
| Requesting notification and checks in the Metropolitan Police (MET) area..... | 22 |
| Command structure: roles and responsibility .....                             | 23 |
| Gold commander .....  | 23 |
| Silver commander.....   | 23 |
| Bronze commander .....  | 23 |
| Team roles .....  | 24 |
| Officer in charge (OIC).....  | 24 |
| Other team roles .....  | 25 |
| Police support.....   | 25 |
| Observers and interpreters .....  | 26 |
| Vehicles.....   | 26 |
| Infant and child car seats .....  | 26 |
| Operational briefing and operational order .....                              | 27 |
| Operational order: IIMARCH procedure.....                                     | 27 |
| Organisation and attendees.....   | 28 |
| When to give a briefing .....   | 28 |
| Officer in charge.....  | 28 |
| Supervising officer or silver commander .....                                 | 28 |
| Conducting an operational briefing .....                                      | 29 |
| Who is going to give the briefing .....                                       | 29 |
| Who to invite .....   | 29 |
| The operational order.....  | 29 |
| Time .....  | 30 |
| Location .....  | 30 |

# About this guidance

This guidance tells Immigration Enforcement officers how operations are tasked and authorised, the preparation that needs to take place before an operation and how an operation is commanded and managed.

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email Enforcement Policy.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

## Clearance and publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **06 December 2016**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

New guidance

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Intelligence led operations

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers the overarching policy for operations and visits.

All Immigration Enforcement visits must be conducted sensitively. The principle, when conducting immigration enquiries, is that they must not be speculative. Conducting enquiries in the community is regarded as a highly sensitive area of work and the Home Office recognises that public reassurance and community safety are fundamental responsibilities.

Immigration Enforcement operations may only be mounted where information suggests that a person who is in breach of immigration law may be found at a particular location. Intelligence to this effect must be passed to an appropriately authorised intelligence officer so it may be logged, tested against other available intelligence sources and be verified or rejected. It is imperative that all information is risk assessed and prioritised to ensure that:

- obligations for safeguarding staff are met with respect to health and safety
- offenders and suspected immigration offenders are apprehended
- visits are planned according to national tasking priorities
- visits are planned on intelligence and are carried out after obtaining the appropriate level of authority
- information relating to all enforcement (or non-enforcement) visits or operations (including police call outs) are recorded
- outcomes of visits are recorded
- management information (MI) can be provided in support of a performance management framework at both a local and national level

Further guidance on the planning of operational visits to places of employment is contained in Illegal working operations.

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## Official – sensitive: start of section

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## Official – sensitive: end of section

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# The tier system of investigation and operations

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the tier system which is applied to all enforcement operations.

**All tiers of operation (lower, middle and upper) must be approved by the tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) in advance.**

The tier system provides for the maintaining of appropriate levels of authority in all enforcement operations. The tier of operation is dictated by the:

- number of suspects being sought
- number of addresses to be visited simultaneously
- number of officers (both police and Immigration Enforcement) to be used
- overall sensitivity and profile of the proposed visit or operation

## Lower tier

The lower tier visit will typically cover the 'one-off' enquiry into an individual suspect's status and will cover visits where there is a realistic expectation of finding up to 3 offenders. If the visit is to a place of employment you must follow the guidance in Illegal working operations.

The risk assessment and operational need will include an assessment of the number of officers required, and must be agreed by the officer authorising the visit.

The minimum level of authority for lower tier visits is at Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) grade.

## Middle tier

Middle tier operations are usually when up to 3 suspects have been identified in advance, but circumstances suggest that 1 to 20 other suspects might be present, such as at multi-occupancy premises or places of work where it may only be possible to identify those sought by asking others for evidence of identity and immigration status. Such legitimate enquiries must not be extended so as to constitute random checks. But where initial related enquiries indicate that suspects, other than those identified in advance are present, these may be pursued.

See also:

- Enforcement interviews
- Operational enforcement visits

Middle tier operations must have the prior authority of an inspector. The inspector must ensure that the Deputy Director is aware in advance that a middle tier operation is taking place and that they are advised as soon as possible of the outcome of the operation, particularly where media interest is likely. This will be of particular

importance where suspects have been apprehended other than those identified in advance.

## Upper tier or major operations

These usually involve large numbers of immigration and police officers, and the operation may attract media interest.

The number of people involved will dictate the need for an upper tier operation but it may be that the high profile and sensitivity of targeting one particular suspect will result in the operation being categorised as 'upper tier'.

If the visit is to a place of employment you must also follow the guidance contained in Illegal working operations.

As a general guide, upper tier procedures are to be applied where enquiries indicate that:

- more than 20 suspected offenders are likely to be found
- it is not possible to obtain, for advance checks, the names of those people whom it is proposed will form the basis of the enquiry, but there is repeated evidence of the use of a particular address or place of employment by offenders
- there is evidence of individuals or groups being engaged in organising, for example, illegal entry or entry with forged documents
- the apprehension of one or more individual offenders is likely to generate abnormally high media or parliamentary interest
- there is a need for a long-term investigation into a specific area of abuse of immigration control

Upper tier operations must be authorised by the relevant Deputy Director and, where relevant for multi-agency operations with the police, senior police officers. The Immigration Minister must be informed and Press Office advised in advance of the operation.

**Such operations place the work of the police and Immigration Enforcement under the closest scrutiny and meticulous planning is essential.**

Particular attention needs to be paid to:

- the timing of the operation
- the number of officers involved
- interpreters
- transport
- escort and detention arrangements

This is not an exhaustive list.

The police should not be notified about an upper tier operation until approval in principle has been obtained from the Deputy Director.

## Operational names

Both middle and upper tier operations require an operational name.

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Routine or 'one off' enforcement visits do not require an operation name. A routine enforcement visit tends to target residential premises, or small shops, takeaways, restaurants or businesses, where a small number of offenders may be identified.

An operation name is only required if there is a specific group of suspects which is likely to involve work which will span a significant period of time and potentially require deployment of significant resource. For example, it could:

- be a single target but directed surveillance authority or other tactics need to be deployed
- involve an organised crime group
- be a planned operation involving high numbers of suspected immigration offenders

An operation requires greater operational resource over a greater period of time, possibly with involvement from other government departments and usually contributes to mitigating the threats as outlined in the Immigration Enforcement control strategy. There is a much larger element of planning, coordination and evaluation involved in an operation compared to an enforcement visit.

### Related content

[Contents](#)



# Tasking, authorisation and constraints

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers how visits and operations are tasked and authorised.

## Tasking

All visits will be tasked by the local, area or regional tasking and co-ordination group (TCG) which will allocate work according to the priorities outlined in the current priorities matrix.

A record will be kept of all 'tasked' work and, other than under the exception below, no operational activity must be undertaken unless authorised by the TCG.

In certain exceptional circumstances, such as when the justification for a visit is urgent and awaiting authorisation from the next scheduled TCG would be inappropriate, you may seek authority from a manager not below the rank of Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) or Senior Executive Officer (SEO). That authority, if granted, must be made in writing and recorded on the case file before any visit takes place.

## Record of authority

You must record the results of all checks and received authorisations from all relevant authorities on the [operation notification form](#) (ONF), or authorised equivalent recording system in areas the ONF is not used. The completed ONF will become part of the visit record and will be retained for 6 years.

Where the ONF system is not used, you must record the authority on the intelligence package. This forms part of the visit record and is required to be retained for 6 years.

Regardless of which system is used, you are required to obtain the following written authorities:

- police checks on people sought and the address to be visited must be signed and dated as having been conducted, this is to avoid direct or collateral intrusion on the operations of other law enforcement agencies
- community impact assessment or equivalent authorised assessment must be signed and dated as having been conducted and authorised by the Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) within the 14 days prior to the planned date of the visit

Immigration checks need to be signed and dated as having been conducted and the minimum authority of an arrest trained CIO as having been granted in writing for the visit to proceed.

## Authorisation: out of hours visits

You must obtain specific approval for any visit to a residential premises outside normal hours. 'Normal' hours are generally defined as being between 6:30am and

9:30pm. There is no prohibition on visits outside this period but each case has to be decided on its own merits and it is for the officer to consider if the visit would be frustrated if carried out at a different time. CIOs must bear in mind the sensitivity of immigration enquiries when authorising and agreeing times for visits and ensure that the rationale for the timing of the visit is recorded.

The timing of visits to business premises may be approached with more flexibility. Visits are likely to coincide with business hours and will be dependent on the nature of the business. An early or late visit may not require special authorisation if that is when an offender is most likely to be located. If the premises are mixed use, or suspected to be mixed use, the timing of the visit is likely to be considered in line with visits to residential premises.

Enforcement visits involving cases with children should normally be conducted after 6:30am unless a specific risk assessment indicates that an earlier visit is operationally necessary.

In family returns cases, the timing of all enforcement visits will be considered by the Independent Family Returns Panel (IFRP) as part of the return plan specific to each family. Any visit which is to take place before 6:30am or after 9:30pm must be detailed in the return plan presented to the IFRP, it must give specific reasons to explain why a visit time outside these hours is proposed.

### **Authority for visit not given**

All decisions not to undertake an operation for health and safety or other reasons at any particular time must be documented and submitted to the tactical tasking and coordination group.

#### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Pre-visit surveillance

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers when and how to make advance reconnaissance before an operational visit.

## Surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

The [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000](#) (RIPA) governs intrusive investigative techniques such as the interception of communications, covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources.

Part II of RIPA covers covert surveillance and covert human intelligence sources.

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**Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Pre-visit checks: logging proposed visits

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers what checks they must make before any operational visit. It also tells them how to record the results of the checks.

## Mandatory checks

All checks listed are mandatory before any operational arrest visit being undertaken. This list is not exhaustive but is a minimum requirement. Additional checks on other information systems, such as the central reference system (CRS) visa system, may be necessary.

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These checks enable you while preparing the case to:

- ensure that officers identify the correct premises and to ensure that the right address is named on the warrant
- check information relating to suspected immigration offenders and people liable to detention to ascertain that no barriers to removal exist and that the person sought does not have any legal basis of stay that would prevent removal if encountered and arrested or detained
- identify any warning signals or potential risks that could impact on an arrest team visit, potentially endangering the officers involved, the subject of the visit and any third parties:
  - this information enables the officer in charge (OIC) to evaluate the potential risk associated with the visit and, as part of the risk assessment process, put into place measures to reduce this risk to an acceptable level
- identify any personal circumstances or special needs the subject may have that may need to be taken into account as part of the risk assessment process, such as the existence of a previously unknown European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) partner, children or that the subject is on medication

You must record the findings on the file minutes and, where applicable, on the special conditions screen on CID. You must bring them to the attention of the OIC to allow them to accurately risk assess and manage the visit.

When a decision has been made to conduct an enforcement visit, you must ensure that you:

- have exhausted all reasonable avenues for determining the immigration status of those people known or believed to be at the premises
- where you are relying on a power of entry, you have reasonable cause to suspect that the person still resides at the target address

In addition, you must, as far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate any other person from your enquiries who may be present at the address and is of no immigration interest. You must undertake final status checks, including CID and CRS, as close as possible to the timing of the visit, and at least within 7 days.

## **Return visits to addresses**

Visits to premises form a sensitive area of immigration work and one cause of complaint is alleged harassment by officers who have conducted repeated visits to the same address. The national operations database (nodMMX) will indicate whether

an address has been visited before and must be fully completed to record all visits. Especially where more than one visit is made to an address, each visit must be fully justified as being proportionate and necessary.

## **Requesting data from the Police National Computer (PNC)**

For guidance on the information held on the PNC and who can access it see Police National Computer.

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**These checks are not exhaustive. You are expected to make common-sense use of all available sources of information to ensure operational efficiency and to reduce unnecessary risk to staff.**

If, during pre-visit checks, you find that the targeted individual, or another linked to the address, is shown on CID special conditions as vulnerable due to mental health problems, contact your local safeguarding coordinator immediately to check whether the individual has been referred to the local health authority, taking appropriate action as detailed in guidance on suicide and self-harm. This applies to any visit you are carrying out, such as arrest, non-arrest or compliance.

The OIC will need to factor in the vulnerability of the individual and decide on any actions to take during the operation to cater for their wellbeing.

### **Right to rent: pre visit checks**

See Right to Rent: landlords' penalties.

### **Logging proposed visits: national operations database**

Visits recorded on nodMMX are split into 3 categories:

- enforcement visit (EV) – a visit where the apprehension of an immigration offender is intended, this visit starts with an intelligence package, and must be authorised by the tasking and co-ordinating group (TCG)
- non-enforcement visit (NEV) – a visit where the intention is not to arrest
- police call-out (PCO) – a reactive visit where officers attend an office (police station) to deal with a suspect who is (potentially) already under arrest

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### **Related content**

[Contents](#)



# Operational planning: people at risk

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers what additional considerations to make if they expect to encounter children or people at risk during the operational visit.

## People at risk: detention assessment

See also Identifying people at risk.

Following all appropriate [pre-visit checks](#) and taking into account all other available information, an assessment must be made of whether the arrest of those encountered is likely to be appropriate. In all cases in which an individual is being considered for arrest, you must make an assessment of whether the individual is 'at risk' and, if so, the level of risk (based on the available evidence) into which they fall.

If you consider the individual to be at risk, an assessment must be made of whether the immigration considerations outweigh the risk considerations.

## Section 55: safeguarding children

In addition to the above, [section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#) requires the Home Office to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK, whilst carrying out Immigration Enforcement functions, including where children are encountered on an operational visit.

As part of planning and implementation, you must evidence any safeguarding and welfare considerations, showing how those considerations have been balanced against the need to maintain the integrity of immigration control.

The following considerations and preparations must form part of the operational safeguarding planning in all cases where children are expected to be present:

- [clothing and personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [method of entry](#)
- [personal effects and baggage](#)
- [provision of child car seats](#)
- [educational exams](#)
- [DBS checks and training for staff](#)

See also:

- Identifying people at risk
- Family returns process (FRP)

## Clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE)

The operational risk assessment for visits to premises where children are expected to be present must show consideration of the impact of the physical appearance of officers wearing overt PPE, upon any children present. Discreet body armour is available if considered to be appropriate.

## Method of entry

Forced entry into premises where children are likely to be present may cause children distress. During operational planning you must consider, and evidence, whether forced entry is necessary for each situation.

See 'Using force to secure entry to premises: method of entry (MoE)' of Arrest and restraint.

## Personal effects and baggage

A family must ordinarily be allowed a minimum of 60 minutes to pack their belongings, unless otherwise dictated by the risk assessment. You must take into account the section 55 duty when considering the appropriate time allowed including considerations regarding:

- any special needs of the children
- the size of the family
- the length of their stay in the UK.

Families must be encouraged to pack:

- official Home Office documents
- other official documents, including birth certificates
- solicitor's details
- health records, Personal Child Health Records (redbook), and health related aids (such as hearing aids, dentures, contact lenses)
- essential medication
- educational certificates
- financial documents (such as savings books, bank statements, cheque books)
- sufficient and appropriate clothing for each member of the family whilst in open and pre-departure accommodation (according to their return plan) as well as on arrival in the country of return
- baby equipment such as nappies and formula milk
- toys and books for children

Children must also be encouraged to pack contact details for friends and a favourite toy or belonging.

You do not have to stay on the premises if it is clear that the family have finished packing in less time than 60 minutes. You must always ask the family (subject to the risk assessment), regardless of how long it takes them to pack, if they have had sufficient time to do so and record this in your pocket notebook.

Family engagement officers, and Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) staff routinely advise families and individuals of the need to make arrangements for their property or belongings prior to removal, the need to pack essential items for the journey, and that packing their personal belongings themselves (where possible) is in their best interests.

See also Family returns process (FRP).

There may however, be occasions where a family, or individual, is unable or unwilling to pack belongings on behalf of themselves, their children, or any vulnerable family members, prior to removal, and where any children or vulnerable adults are unable (possibly through age or special needs) to pack for themselves.

See 'Non statutory handling of property and baggage' of search and seizure for full details on the powers and limitations of searching and packing essential items on behalf of families or individuals.

## Educational exams

The impact of removal action upon the welfare and development of the child at their current stage of education must be weighed against the possible effects of delaying removal for an extended period during which additional ties to the UK may be formed.

Where any children under the age of 18 are studying for:

- **GCSEs or A levels** (or their equivalents) – do not plan a removal that would take place in the 3 months leading up to any final exams
- **vocational courses** (or those based on modular coursework completed over a number of years) - do not delay removal action for modular and vocational courses that do not include final examinations

However, in both cases you must give careful consideration to the current stage of the child's studies and consider this alongside all other known factors of the case to determine if it is proportionate to exceptionally bring forward or delay a removal in any individual case, you must obtain Assistant Director authority where you propose to do so.

## Disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks and training for staff

Any officer dealing with cases involving children, or working in an environment where they may come across a child or vulnerable adult, must hold an enhanced DBS (formerly Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)) check, and have undertaken relevant training which is proportionate and relevant to the roles and responsibilities of each officer.

### DBS checks

If you require enhanced DBS disclosure you must ensure you renew it every 3 years. Although human resources directorate holds a central database for DBS checks, they do **not** issue reminders to staff to prompt renewal, and managers must maintain local records for that purpose.

Managers can request checks against the central records by contacting the Disclosure and Barring Service mailbox and requesting an 'Annex A' form to complete and return. If a renewal is required, the relevant forms will be sent to the individual to complete.

Enhanced DBS certificates are sent directly to the individual. Following receipt, officers must inform the Disclosure and Barring Service mailbox, copying in their line manager, so that both central and local records can be updated.

### **Keeping children safe (KCS) training**

All officers dealing with cases involving children, or working in an environment where they may come across a child or vulnerable adult, must undertake training which is proportionate and relevant to their roles and responsibilities:

- **KCS (tier 1):** a short e-learning module which must be completed at least every 2 years by officials across Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, UK Visas and Immigration as well as those who carry out any kind of borders or immigration related work elsewhere in the department
- **KCS (tier 2):** a one day classroom course, which is mandatory for operational staff up to HMI or SEO working within a family context, but is also available to all staff who, as part of their work, make any kind of decision taking children into account

Local management are responsible for ensuring that this training is completed and refreshed as necessary for all staff involved in family arrest activity. See keeping children safe training for information on booking KCS courses.

### **Last minute claims to be part of a family with children**

There may be situations where an individual, who was not previously known to the Home Office, or was not previously known to be part of a family with children, is arrested or detained for immigration purposes (including where a referral is made by the police or by a prison) and then claims to be part of a family with children for the first time. These claims must be investigated immediately.

If you decide that no family life with a child exists, or that a family life with a child does exist but the individual can be removed or deported without their child, you must follow the Family separations guidance. You must make a full consideration of the individual's claim and any article 8 rights, before proceeding with the removal. See Appendix FM and 276ADE (family members and private life): On or after 9 July 2012 for further details of article 8 considerations.

If you decide that a family life with a child has been established, and the individual must be returned with their children, the individual must be released, and considered for referral into the family returns process (FRP).

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Requesting police assistance

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers how to request police assistance for an operational visit.

## Operation notification form (ONF)

The ONF has been devised to standardise enforcement visit documentation and has been introduced to all Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams outside of the Metropolitan Police (MET) area.

Its purpose is to enable:

- Immigration Enforcement to request local police assistance for an enforcement visit
- Immigration Enforcement to notify the police of a planned enforcement visit where no additional local police assistance is required
- Immigration Enforcement to gather all the intelligence held by the police forces regarding the subjects and the addresses they plan to visit
- the local police commander to carry out a community impact assessment (CIA) of the proposed visit
- Immigration Enforcement to collect data in respect of the best value performance indicator (BVPI) 191 (police assistance to Immigration Enforcement)
- Immigration Enforcement to notify police of the result of the visit using the intelligence feedback report

## Completing the ONF

ICE or local intelligence team will be responsible for ensuring the operation notification form is completed, liaising with local police forces to complete the relevant sections highlighted on the form. Arrangements over responsibility will be agreed at a local level. Before conducting a visit or requesting police assistance, you must consult the intelligence unit and obtain authorisation from a Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) or above. For arrest team visits the authorising officer must be arrest trained.

The local ICE or intelligence team complete sections 1 to 5. You must then send the completed ONF to the relevant local police force no less than 3 days before the visit is due to take place, to a:

- seconded police officer for the relevant police force
- locally agreed point of contact at the relevant local police force

Either the seconded police officer, or the nominated officer in the relevant local police force complete sections 6 to 10 (police checks), to show the results of the police checks. If the police officer is aware of any reasons why the visit should not take place, they will indicate this in section 9.

Once the completed ONF is received back from the police force, it is the responsibility of the Immigration Enforcement police regional liaison officer (RLO) to

discuss any concerns and options which are raised with the nominated police officer. RLOs must document any discussions on section 9 of the ONF.

Once the seconded police officer or the nominated officer in the relevant local police force has completed their checks, they need to return the ONF within 72 hours from when they received the form. However, this may vary according to local procedures. It is important to note that the ONF is valid for **one calendar month** from the date when the police intelligence checks have been completed. This is the date that appears at the end of section 10.

Only in exceptional circumstances can the ONF be sent less than 3 days before the proposed date of the visit. If there are exceptional circumstances, this must be discussed and documented by a CIO (arrest trained for arrest team visits) or above, to explain the reason why. The intelligence unit must then send the ONF to their local police force, but must follow this up immediately by telephone to confirm receipt of the form.

If you will require police assistance on the visit, the intelligence unit will need to indicate this in section 1 of the ONF. In most cases, where a request is made for police assistance, discussion will take place between the intelligence unit and local police officers to agree resources and tactics for the planned operation. For middle or upper tier operations, this will normally be a formal planning meeting and will require approval from the local tasking and co-ordination group (TCG).

## Requesting notification and checks in the Metropolitan Police (MET) area

In the MET area, checks and notification for operations are conducted by the Central London Research Unit (CLRU).

Those who are outside of London and who require research carried out in the MET area must send an email from NOD headed with the enforcement visit (TS) reference number and the proposed visit date to Central London Intelligence Unit.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Command structure: roles and responsibility

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the command structure that will be set up for an operational visit.

All operational visits must be properly tasked and have a clear command structure comprising a single officer in charge (OIC) and qualified named officers providing the gold, silver and bronze command structure for when a critical incident is declared.

## Gold commander

The gold commander must have received the appropriate gold commander training and has responsibility for:

- handling and the outcome of the critical incident
- setting out the overall strategy for the recapture of a high harm person
- a key role in making sure there are enough resources available

It is essential that one manager takes the role of gold commander from the beginning. In some circumstances there may already be a gold commander, for example if a high harm individual is already known to the Home Office.

## Silver commander

The silver commander is responsible for making a tactical plan to achieve the gold commander's strategy.

## Bronze commander

The bronze commander, usually the OIC, makes the operational decisions necessary for the tactical plan to work as the incident is being dealt with. There may be more than one bronze commander, for example:

- bronze investigation commander who runs the investigation in practical terms
- bronze intelligence commander to manage the long term intelligence needs
- bronze media commander to manage internal and external communications
- bronze enforcement commander to arrange enforcement resources required

You must not perform any of these roles unless you have received the relevant training.

## Related content

[Contents](#)

# Team roles

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the roles and responsibilities that may be allocated for an operational visit.

## Officer in charge (OIC)

In order to comply with the [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(PACE\) codes of practice](#), there must be an OIC for every visit. They must be an arrest-trained officer of at least Immigration Officer (IO) grade except for public operations where the OIC must be Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) grade or above.

The OIC will usually assume the role of [Bronze commander](#) within the overall command structure of any operational visit.

[Code B of the PACE codes of practice](#) places certain obligations on the OIC in the searching of premises. It is the responsibility of the OIC to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled.

Before undertaking any operational visit, the OIC must ensure that they have read the intelligence package and have a competent overview of the visit intention. The OIC must ensure:

- the risk assessment procedures outlined have been completed and the necessary authority has been given
- the risk assessment and authority is still valid
- consideration has been given to obtaining a search warrant
- the information is current and accurate
- the local police are aware of all the planned visits
- the officers on the visit are advised of the time of the briefing
- the following equipment is available and is in working order:
  - mobile phone and/or airwave radio
  - warrant card
  - handcuffs
  - baton
  - first aid equipment
  - personal notebook (PNB)
  - notices to occupiers and/or arrested persons (including translations)
  - vehicles, with sufficient fuel
- the premises search officer has sufficient consent forms, evidence bags and notebooks
- a 'gold/silver/bronze' (GSB) structure (see [Command structure: roles and responsibility](#)) is in place for the management of any potential critical incident
- an operational order has been compiled and circulated, in advance, to everyone in the GSB hierarchy
- roles have been allocated to team members
- they have fully briefed and equipped the team and anyone else accompanying the team

See also OIC's duties with regard to:



- [Operational briefing and operational order](#)
- [Vehicles](#)

And guidance relating to:

- Operational enforcement visits
- Post enforcement visit actions

## Other team roles

Under no circumstances may an IO undertake an operational activity visit under these procedures unless accompanied by at least one other arrest-trained officer.

In practice, the number of officers deployed will depend upon the type and scale of the activity being carried out and will be determined by the OIC having regard to the risk assessment.

Once a safe and secure environment is established, then you may be expected to be involved in any of the following:

- dealing with people encountered on the premises:
  - establishing their identity and immigration status
- conducting arrests and subsequent actions (where appropriate)
- conducting person or premises searches

See also:

- Arrest and restraint
- Search and seizure
- Operational enforcement visits

## Police support

If risk assessment or operational requirements show the need for a police presence on an arrest team operation, the OIC will allocate specific roles to the police officers and must ensure that they, too, receive the [operational briefing and operational order](#).

The OIC must ensure that all officers present are aware of any legal limitations or restrictions affecting police officers on Immigration Enforcement visits.

Where appropriate the police may take charge to manage or control any incident they believe poses a threat to life or property, or to detect or prevent a (non-immigration) criminal offence. Once this is resolved, they should return control to the OIC.

## Observers and interpreters

If observers are to be present during arrest team operations, the OIC must use generic risk assessments and safe systems of work to put in place suitable risk management methods to ensure the safety of the observers.

The observer or interpreter must be assigned to a dedicated arrest trained cover officer and attend the operational briefing so that they are aware of the risk management procedures for the visit.

Observers and interpreters will only enter premises once the OIC believes it is safe for them to do so.

It is mandatory for observers and interpreters to wear personal protective equipment and clothing (PPE) in line with the risk-assessed control measures for the operation.

See also 'Use of interpreters: administrative interviews' of Enforcement interviews.

## Vehicles

The OIC is responsible for ensuring that sufficient and appropriate vehicles are available to undertake the visit, and that drivers hold a current and valid UK driving licence for the category of vehicle being driven.

The OIC is responsible for ensuring that drivers are aware of, and comply with, the relevant risk assessment framework and safe systems of work for driving official vehicles.

Park vehicles only where it is legal to do so, and make every effort to allow officers and detainees to leave the area swiftly upon completion of the visit.

Drivers must comply with the Fleet and driver policy. See also 'Carriage of detainees' of Arrest and restraint.

## Infant and child car seats

The OIC is responsible for ensuring that approved child seats, booster seats and booster cushions are used when transporting children and young people. The seats must be suitable for the age and weight of the child concerned and the vehicle in which they are being fitted and must conform to European Safety Standards R44.03. For further guidance see [Child car seats: the law](#).

Only appropriately trained persons can install child car seats, training will be provided locally, either directly by the manufacturer or cascaded down by trained colleagues.

Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) teams must regularly inspect car seats for damage, and decommission and replace seats where required.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Operational briefing and operational order

This page tells Immigration Enforcement officers about the briefing that must take place before an operational visit.

## Operational order: IIMARCH procedure

Each arrest team visit requires an operational order as part of the planning phase of the operation. Its format is that of the 'IIMARCH' procedure and it is the responsibility of the officer in charge (OIC) ([bronze commander](#)) to ensure its completion.

It is important you give the briefing in the following sequence because it:

- gives structure and clarity
- makes it easier to understand
- is a uniform format all law enforcement agencies are familiar with

If possible, you must prepare a separate briefing document for each deployment.

### I - information

The information section informs officers who the subject or subjects of the visit are. It gives the address where the visit is to take place and the reason for the operational visit, detailing where appropriate the reasons for seeking arrest.

### I - intent

The intent section states what officers intend to do if they find the subject or subjects and how to deal with any other persons found on the premises. It also states the strategy for the operational activity as set by the [gold commander](#).

### M - method

The method section details the tactics set by the OIC (bronze commander) and [silver commander](#), specifying roles and responsibilities as well as detailing the way in which entry, arrest, search and transportation to custody will be effected.

### A - administration

The administration section details legislative, administrative, procedural and operational factors affecting the operational visit.

### R - risk assessment

This section highlights potential risks associated with an operational visit and details what risk management methods are in place. It details actions to be taken if an incident occurs.

### C - communications

This section details how officers will communicate within a team, and with the police and other agencies that are involved in the visit, or may need to be contacted in the course of the operation. It also details contingency plans for communications failure or difficulties.

## **H - human rights**

This section states whether the visit is justified, proportionate and necessary and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Most police forces now add on 'E' and 'R' at the end which stands for 'evaluate' and 'review'. Although the Home Office does not use these at present you need to know about them in case you attend a police briefing. These sections cover a general evaluation and review of the operation.

The briefing documents, operational orders, operation notification form (ONF) and intelligence packs carry a security classification of 'official - sensitive' which must be clearly marked on the header and footer of all documents. Once a briefing has been held, the documents must be left in Home Office or police premises, or secured in a locked Home Office official vehicle if multiple dynamic briefings are planned to be held after each subsequent visit.

**The documents must not under any circumstances be taken into the premises visited as it can compromise the intelligence and source.**

## **Organisation and attendees**

### **When to give a briefing**

You must give a briefing to your team before any operational deployment takes place outside of the office or port controlled area, if possible.

There may be times, however, when you are unable to prepare a written briefing or hold a full briefing, for example on a deployment taking place at short notice. In these circumstances you must:

- still give a verbal briefing
- record details as soon as you can, in your pocket notebook

### **Officer in charge**

It is your responsibility when planning and conducting an operational deployment or briefing to:

- identify all possible checks you can make
- make those checks
- get the results
- identify any known or potential risks
- find ways to reduce the risks
- warn every person going on the visit about the risks

### **Supervising officer or silver commander**

It is your responsibility to:

- make sure the OIC has made the relevant checks

- satisfy yourself the activity can be conducted safely before you authorise it to go ahead
- make a record of your decision and the reasons for it
- make sure all officers on the deployment have been told about any risks

## Conducting an operational briefing

### Who is going to give the briefing

It is normally your responsibility as OIC to prepare and conduct the briefing, but, you may decide that parts of the briefing are given by someone else. For example, you may:

- ask the [silver commander](#) to make an introduction
- ask individual team leaders to give the briefing for their particular deployment when you are conducting a large operation with several teams
- ask an expert who is better qualified to give part of the briefing
- be working with teams who wish to give their own briefing, for example:
  - a police unit for part of the deployment

### Who to invite

You must invite:

- all officers taking part in the deployment including police officers if they are to provide additional support
- interpreters who will be assisting
- any other experts you may need on the deployment, for example social workers

There are many other people you may choose to invite, for example:

- observers
- members of the media, if authorised

### The operational order

You must think about:

- how many copies you will need
- how you will account for each copy (as they all have to be returned at the end of the briefing), for example you can:
  - number copies
  - use a sheet to sign them out and back in
- when you are going to hand them out, for example:
  - at the start of the briefing
  - at the end of the briefing
  - by email before the briefing itself (see bullets below)
- clearly marking the operational order 'official - sensitive' so that officers do not remove or take on deployment

You may decide it is best not to hand them out at the start of the briefing so everyone will concentrate fully on what you are saying.

If you send the operational order by email you must:

- bear in mind you will have no control over officers printing copies
- make it clear in the email the document is marked 'official - sensitive' as well as marking the document itself

## Time

When deciding what time to hold your briefing, consider:

- whether the briefing needs to take place immediately before the deployment, this is best practice because the information will be fresh in everyone's minds, but:
  - it is not mandatory
  - you want to maximise the time available for the deployment itself
- likely traffic delays during any travel period
- the time you hold your briefing may be affected by Working time regulations policy

## Location

Briefings can be conducted either in the office before the visit takes place, or at a secure location along the way that includes Home Office official vehicles. After the first visit, the officer in charge will designate a suitable briefing area before each subsequent visit. You must take care to ensure that the briefing is not overheard by third parties.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)