



Home Office

## Escaped detainees

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## Escaped detainees

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This guidance tells Home Office staff and criminal investigators working in the enforcement and crime group (ECG) what to do if a detainee escapes from detention or whilst being escorted.

This guidance tells you about:

- when the criminal and financial investigation (CFI) immigration specialist teams will assist following an escape
- definitions of escape
- reporting an escape or 'red incident'
- what to do if there is an escape
- closing an incident, and
- communications.

Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since the previous version of this guidance.

Contacts – This page tells you who to contact for help if your senior caseworker or line manager can't answer your question.

Information owner – This page tells you about this version of the guidance and who owns it.

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## Escaped detainees

### Changes to this guidance

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This page lists changes to the 'Escaped detainees' guidance, with the most recent at the top.

Date of the change	Details of the change
25 March 2014	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li></ul>
12 September 2013	Six month review by the modernised guidance team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor housekeeping changes.</li></ul>
	For previous changes to this guidance you will find all earlier versions in the archive. See related link: Escaped detainees - archive.

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## Escaped detainees

### Definitions of escape and when you can assist the investigation

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This section tells you the different definitions of escape the detention services currently use and how to report an escape or incident.

Criminal and financial investigation (CFI) immigration specialist teams will assist the investigation following:

- a successful escape, or
- an attempted escape

in cases where the escaped person is:

- considered to be a 'high harm' person, or
- where the senior management team believe there is a high risk of reputational damage to the Home Office.

For more information on 'high harm' persons see related link: High risk border breaches.

#### **Definition of an escape from an immigration removal centre**

The detention services order (DSO) 13/2005 defines a detainee has escaped from an immigration removal centre (IRC) when:

- 'he or she unlawfully gains his or her liberty by breaching the secure perimeter of an IRC, that is, the outside wall or fence of that IRC, and is at liberty for a period in excess of fifteen minutes.'

#### **Definition of an escape from escort**

The DSO 13/2005 defines a detainee has escaped from escort when:

- 'he or she is able to pass beyond the control of escorting staff and is at liberty for a period in excess of fifteen minutes. This may involve overcoming physical restraints such as a wall or fence, locks, bolts or bars, a secure vehicle, handcuffs, or the direct

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supervision of escorting staff.'

**Definition of an attempted escape**

The definition of an attempted escape detention services is currently using is:

- 'A detainee attempts to escape when he or she tries to breach a secure perimeter or supervision, or where an incident has occurred which was directed towards escaping.'

This is the authorised definition which you must use. It is slightly different to the definition in detention services order (DSO) 13/2005, which is due to be updated.

For more information on definitions of escape, see related link: 07. Reporting of Escapes - 13-2005.

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## Escaped detainees

### Levels of incidents and how to handle them

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This page tells you what levels of incidents there are and how you must handle a detainee escape.

#### **Detention services order (DSO) 12/2008**

DSO 12/2008 standardised how you must report, handle and communicate an incident within the detention estate.

Incidents fall into one of three categories depending on how severe they are.

#### **Red incidents**

Red incidents are the most severe and you must report them to the senior manager immediately. Examples include:

- an escaped detainee
- a death
- serious self harm
- hostage taking.

#### **Amber incidents**

Amber incidents are serious and you must report them to the senior manager as soon as possible. Examples include:

- an attempted escape
- key or lock compromises
- infectious diseases.

#### **Green incidents**

Green incidents are the least serious. You must note them locally but you do not need to report them to detention services headquarters. Examples include:

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- drug or alcohol finds
- minor fights between detainees.

There are more examples in DSO 12/2008. For more information see related link: 24. Reporting and Communicating Incidents - 12-2008.

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## Escaped detainees

### Reporting a red incident

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This page tells you how to report a detainee escape, which is a red incident.

Once you identify a detainee escape you must:

- notify the senior manager immediately using their mobile telephone number:
  - if there is no reply and it is out of hours you can call their home number
- give brief details of the background to the escape, and
- follow up with an email and copy it to the detention services intelligence team.

The detention services on-call list tells you who the on-call managers are each week, and gives their contact details. For more information, see related link: Detention services on-call list.

The senior manager must:

- decide how serious the incident is and how to report it
- inform the director, and
- liaise with the CCU whilst managing the incident.

The director must:

- notify the:
  - strategic director for the enforcement and crime group
  - CCU
  - chief executive, and
  - minister, if necessary
- decide where to send the senior manager to coordinate Home Office activity.

The CCU will be responsible for:

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- notifying all of the other immigration removal centres' duty managers'
- keeping the other centres updated about the management of the incident
- give updates on developments to:
  - the chief executive
  - the rapid response team
  - private office, and
  - the press office
- drafting press lines for director clearance.

**Setting up rooms to manage the incident**

The director may decide to set up a special room from which to manage the incident. This is known as the 'gold suite', in line with the way the Home Office deals with critical incidents. The room will be set up, with all necessary facilities, at:

- the detention services, Bedford Point, or
- another room designated for this purpose.

For more information on critical incidents see related link: [44 Critical incident management](#).

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## Escaped detainees

### Who can help you deal with an escaped detainee

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This section tells you who can help you if a detainee escapes, and the role of the specialist team involved in the investigation.

#### How the different teams involved can help your investigation

If a detainee escapes it is essential you make early contact with the local police and the immigration, compliance and engagement (ICE) team. It is important to develop a good working relationship between the ICE team and the police.

You must not assume local police will:

- have resources to support or take the investigative lead, or
- will accept the assessed risk level.

You can get assistance from the enforcement and crime group specialist teams with any investigation following a detainee escape. You must put the on-call specialist team on standby, by telephoning their on-call senior investigating officer, to:

- go to the location of the escape, and
- collect all relevant evidence and intelligence.

Detainee records are held on CID, which records details of applications made to the Home Office. You can get this information to confirm the current intelligence held on the detainee by contacting the:

- joint intelligence unit (JIU), or
- command and control unit (CCU).

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[Specialist team standard operating procedure](#)

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## Escaped detainees

### Specialist team standard operating procedure

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This page tells you the steps you must take if you are on the specialist team dealing with the escape.

#### Standard operating procedure for escaped detainees

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**External links**  
[RIPA](#)

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For more information, see related links:

- Detention services on-call list, and
- RIPA.

#### **Status of the escaped detainee**

When a detainee escapes successfully their immigration status returns to what it was before they were detained. At that point they would have been a person liable to arrest and detention.

Following an escape this gives the police and arrest trained Home Office officers the same power of arrest they would have had at the point when the detainee was arrested before

	detention.	
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## Escaped detainees

### Closing the escaped detainee incident

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This page tells you how to close an escaped detainee incident and how the investigation continues.

#### **Closing the incident**

Once all immediate areas of investigation have been covered and there is nothing else you can do, you hand the investigation back to the Home Office detention services who will continue to progress any outstanding investigation.

You must confirm any flags to be put on the Police National Computer with the command and control unit. A flag is a marker that alerts the police to Home Office interest in a person if they come across them at any time.

#### **How long specialist teams stay involved in an incident**

The length of time will depend on the circumstances in each case. As a guide, specialist team involvement has been shown to be effective in the first four days of the investigation.

## Escaped detainees

### Communications for handling escaped detainees

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This page tells you the lines of communication you must follow when dealing with an escaped detainee.

- The immigration removal centre (IRC) contacts the Home Office on-call senior manager who immediately calls the deputy director.
- The deputy director contacts the strategic director for the enforcement and crime group and the Home Office specialist teams in the crime directorate.
- The detention services intelligence team (DSIT) provides intelligence relating to detention to the specialist team and the Home Office senior on-call manager, as stated in the agreed operating procedures.
- The specialist team completes the actions on the standard operating procedures for escaped detainees.

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For a map of this process see related link: Escaped detainee communication map.

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This page explains who to contact if you need more help with a question about escaped detainees.

If you have read this guidance and still need more help, you must first ask your line manager. If you need further help you may contact:

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This page tells you about this version of the 'Escaped detainees' guidance, and who owns it.

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