

New Hope Presbyterian ICE Procedures

Adopted by Session on July 13, 2025

PURPOSE

This policy outlines New Hope Presbyterian Church's ("New Hope", "NHPC" or the "Church") procedures and protocols in the event U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), or law enforcement agents working with these federal agencies attempt to enter or engage with individuals on our premises. New Hope is committed to being compassionate to all people and their circumstances and providing a safe place to worship, as well as a safe atmosphere for all who use this space. The Church is not equipped to provide sanctuary to any individual or group.

KEY PRINCIPLES

We are legally required to not interfere with ICE, CBP, or law enforcement agents. As a church/community organization, we are never required, nor are we encouraged, to ask about anyone's immigration or documentation status. Our role is to provide spiritual support, community care, and uphold the dignity and humanity of all individuals who seek connection here.

1. **Non-Obstruction:** We legally cannot obstruct ICE or CBP agents or law enforcement agents working with them. We legally cannot engage in actions that could be interpreted as interference.

a. Interfering with ICE / CBP agents is a crime that can lead to jail time and fines. This includes actions such as blocking, intimidating, or providing false information to prevent an arrest.

b. Interference with ICE / CBP agents include:

i. Obstruction of justice: Intentionally blocking an ICE / CBP agent while they are doing their job

ii. Aiding and abetting: Helping someone avoid arrest, such as by providing transportation or shelter

iii. Harboring: Hiding an undocumented immigrant from detection

2. **Confidentiality:** We will protect the confidentiality of all individuals and will not share personal information unless legally required.

3. **Documentation:** All communications and actions during any incident involving ICE / CBP will be carefully logged.

4. **Dignity and Compassion:** Our response will be conducted with composure and respect, reflecting our community's values of justice, love, and kindness.

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PREPARATION

1. Establish a Response Team: Designate roles, including:

- Spokesperson: defined as the most senior Pastor on Church property, or if no such Pastor is on site, the most senior staff member and in the absence of a Pastor or staff member, any Elder, Deacon or greeter on Church premises who has been appropriately trained.
- Legal Liaison: Establish legal counsel for New Hope Presbyterian Church
- Recorder: [defined as the second most senior Pastor, staff member, Elder, Deacon or greeter (as compared to the Spokesperson) on Church premises who has been appropriately trained.]
- Safety Coordinator position should be selected by session / church leadership prior to [December 2025] and coordinate Safety and Security Procedures with the procedures outlined in this document.

2. Training:

- Train staff, greeters, and volunteers on these procedures, including the difference between an administrative and judicial warrant.
- Regularly train staff, greeters, and volunteers on legal rights, de-escalation techniques, and protocols for ICE / CBP encounters.

3. Public and Private Areas:

- Clearly define public and private areas within the church buildings and communicate these boundaries to all staff. Private areas should be labeled.
- Establish 'Safe Rooms' where individuals can gather if there is a perceived threat (as defined in NHPC's Safety and Security procedures).

4. Rapid Response Network:

- Create a rapid-response communication network (text messages, phone trees) to mobilize Response Team (as defined above) for on-site support and documentation when ICE / CBP activity is reported.

When ICE / CBP Agents Arrive

When ICE / CBP agents arrive, staff or church members should contact the Spokesperson and activate the Rapid Response Network.

1. Approach by the Spokesperson:

- Respectfully engage agents/law enforcement to de-escalate tensions.
 - in a quiet place offset from the mainstream flow of people, if possible
- Request identification (name, badge number, agency affiliation).
- Examine the Warrant.

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If doors are unlocked and made public, ICE / CBP agents can legally enter New Hope facilities. This includes church grounds and interior spaces behind unlocked doors and hallways that are openly accessible.

If doors are locked or otherwise made non-public, ICE / CBP agents can enter legally in one of two ways:

1. By a legal warrant signed by a judge ("Judicial Warrant"), noting that Administrative Warrants do not justify entry
2. By invitation. Opening a door for an ICE / CBP agent is considered an invitation and allows them to legally enter.

2. It will be the responsibility of the Spokesperson to:

1. Allow entry upon being served any Judicial Warrant; and
2. If an Administrative Warrant is presented, to deny entry to locked areas of the Church if doing so is reasonably perceived that it will minimize disruption to worship services, preschool or other third-party activities taking place on Church premises.

3. Documentation:

- Record details of the interaction, including date, time, location, agent names, badge numbers, and documents presented.
- Take photos or videos if safe to do so.

After ICE Leaves

1. Support for Affected Individuals:

- Provide emotional and spiritual support to anyone affected by the ICE encounter.
- Facilitate connections with immigration attorneys or legal aid organizations to the extent the Church has organized a contact list of such entities and feels it is appropriate under the circumstances.

2. Debrief and Review:

- Review the incident with staff and volunteers to improve procedures.
- Update response plans as necessary.
- Share specifics of the situation with Staff and Elders and determine whether it warrants sharing with the congregation.

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EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- Legal Counsel: _____
- Spokesperson: _____
- Recorder: _____
- Safety Coordinator: _____

This policy is intended to be legally compliant and compassionate. It is not a substitute for legal advice. Please consult legal professionals for guidance specific to your situation.