



Home Office

Detention Services Order 05/2015

Reporting and communicating incidents in the immigration detention estate

April 2021



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Document Details

Process: To outline how incidents in the detention estate and during in country and overseas escorting (including charter flights) should be reported and communicated.

Implementation Date: December 2015 (reissued April 2021)

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Version: 4.1

Contains Mandatory Instructions

For Action: Home Office and supplier staff operating in immigration removal centres (IRC), pre-departure accommodation (PDA) and residential short-term holding facilities (RSTHF) and escorting officers.

For Information: Relevant Home Office, Immigration Enforcement and Border Force officials, including all IE SCS acting as duty Directors

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Processes Affected: The operation of the on call duty rota for the reporting of critical, serious and minor incidents affecting the detention estate and escorts (including overseas escorts) and the sharing of information to the wider business.

Assumptions: Staff conducting on call duties will have sufficient operational knowledge of detention, relevant operational guidance and the detention estate to implement the processes outlined in this instruction

Notes: This Detention Service Order (DSO) replaces DSO 12/2008 – Reporting, Handling and Communicating Incidents, 13/2005 – Reporting of Escapes and 17/2007 – Reporting Incidents of Near Death.

Instruction

Introduction

1. Immigration Enforcement (IE) Detention and Escorting Services operate a three level on call system to manage the reporting and communication of incidents in the immigration detention estate and during escort. The system provides a support and advice structure for all IRC, RSTHF and PDA staff and suppliers. This ensures that incidents which have the potential to impact wider Home Office business and attract media and Parliamentary interest are communicated accurately, promptly, appropriately and to the right people.
2. All references in this DSO to “centre” include immigration removal centres, residential short-term holding facilities and pre-departure accommodation.
3. Two different Home Office teams operate in IRCs:
 - Detention and Escorting Services Compliance team (Compliance team)
 - Immigration Enforcement Detention Engagement team (DET)

The **Compliance team** are responsible for all on-site commercial and contract monitoring work. The **DETs** interact with detained individuals face-to-face on behalf of responsible officers within the detention centres. They focus on communicating and engaging with people detained at IRCs, helping them to understand their cases and detention. DETs are managed by an on-site Home Office DET manager.

There are no DETs at residential STHFs. Functions which would be the responsibility of the DET in IRCs are carried out by the Escorting Contract Monitoring Team (ECMT) in RSTHFs.

Purpose

4. To provide instruction and guidance for all Home Office and supplier staff on the reporting of incidents within the detention estate and during the escorting of detained individuals, including incidents that occur outside of the United Kingdom that are witnessed by detainee escort officers.
5. This detention services order (DSO) outlines how incidents are categorised, how they should be reported and how they will be communicated across the detention estate and the wider Home Office to ensure a standard process is followed.

Detention and Escorting Services on call structure

6. The Detention and Escorting Services (DES) on call rota is updated on a weekly basis. The weekly period of duty for a DES on call officer starts at 18:00hrs on Friday through to 09:00hrs the following Friday morning.

7. Contact details for the DES on call officers are circulated weekly, in advance, by Detention and Escorting Services. It is the responsibility of each individual Compliance team to provide the Detention and Escorting Services on call list to the centre supplier at their centre as soon as it is available. Local arrangements should be put in place to ensure that all suppliers operating at the centre (e.g. Healthcare) are aware of how to raise an incident through a single point i.e. the IRC supplier.

8. The three Compliance on call levels for centres are:

- **A local Compliance on call officer (HEO/EO)** for each IRC who is the initial out of hours point of contact for IRC suppliers and IE staff for both Compliance and DET based at IRCs.
- **A DES on call senior manager (SEO/G7)**, who is the first point of contact for the local Compliance team on call officer to report and escalate a category Red or Amber incident.
- **A DES on call director (G7/G6/SCS)**, who is the point of escalation for the IE on call senior manager in the event of a Red or Amber incident. The DES on call director can also be contacted directly if the DES on call senior manager is not available.

Separately, the Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU) provides a 24 hour duty officer for escorting matters and short-term holding facilities, including holding rooms at ports of entry and reporting centres. The Duty Officer is able to deal with the majority of issues flagged to DEPMU, however if matters are complex or require escalation the DEPMU Senior on call manager will be contacted. The DEPMU senior on call manager may then, where required, escalate a category Red incident to the DES on call senior manager, duty director and DES director and Amber incident to the DES on call senior manager, duty director.

9. In addition to the on call system for centres, IE operates an IE wide on call director (SCS) system. **The IE on call director is a point of consultation for the DES on call director in the event of an incident that extends beyond the detention estate and involves other IE or Home Office areas of responsibility. This is most relevant in the relatively rare case of an escape.**

10. Any contact by the Compliance team with on call officers should be made to their mobile telephone number and if there is no reply the on call senior manager should be the second of point of contact. Officers who know they are not going to be available for short

periods should arrange in advance for their mobile telephones to be diverted to a colleague who is competent and authorised to undertake on call duties.

11. Incidents in IRCs should be reported to the most senior member of the on-site DES team on duty who will then escalate as appropriate. If there is no member of the team on site, notification should be made directly to the local DES on call officer.

Incident categories

12. Incidents are classified according to their seriousness as Red, Amber or Green.

- **Green** (routine) incidents relate to incidents which do not or will not disrupt the normal operation of a facility or adversely affect the safety and security of staff, detained individuals and visitors.
- **Amber** (serious) incidents relate to the management of an event outside of usual centre business that has, or potentially will have an **adverse** impact on the normal operation of a facility or the safety and security of staff, detained individuals and visitors and may result in reputational damage to the Home Office, adverse political impact or national media attention.
- **Red** (critical) incidents relate to the management of an event outside of usual centre business that has, or potentially will have a **serious** impact on the operation of a facility or the safety and security of staff, detained individuals and visitors or the wider public and may result in reputational damage to the Home Office, adverse political impact or media attention.

Red incidents

13. **Red** incidents must be reported by the supplier to DES without delay. The DES on call officer must then escalate the incident immediately to the DES senior manager or on call senior manager providing as much information as possible in line with the checklist at Annex A.

14. The DES on call senior manager will provide advice as required and assess the information provided to ensure that appropriate action is being taken. The DES on call senior manager will then report the incident and the action being taken to the DES on call duty director and the DES director.

15. The DES on call duty director will consider whether the incident should be further escalated to the IE on call director.

16. **Red** incidents include:

- Acts of concerted indiscipline which require mutual assistance from Her Majesty's Prison and Probation service (HMPPS) - or in the case of an IRC in Scotland assistance from Police Scotland)
- Bomb or other explosion threat
- Death of a detained individual or member of staff while on duty (DES officers should refer to DSO 8/2014 Death in Detention for detailed guidance on reporting, handling and communicating an incident involving the death of a detained individual in detention or during escort)
- Abscond - when a detained individual is outside of a centre for legitimate reasons but fails to comply with the conditions of the discharge and unlawfully gains freedom from detention.
- Escape - when a detained individual overcomes a physical barrier/s to unlawfully gain freedom from detention
- Serious fires
- Unplanned demonstrations outside the facility
- Hostage taking
- Prolonged incident at height
- Outbreak of a serious notifiable infectious disease (e.g. confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19, Ebola or chicken pox¹)
- Serious weapons find (e.g. firearm, ammunition)
- Serious data loss that could result in significant risk to individual(s) or reputational and/or financial damage to the Home Office.
- Any other event or incident outside of the control of the service provider or the Home Office that is likely to render the centre completely or partly inoperable or necessitate any evacuation.

Within 24hrs of the reported RED incident, suppliers must liaise with the onsite Compliance Manager (or ECMT Manager/ nominated deputy for RSTHF) to agree timescales for the provision of all supplier records held relating to the detained individual(s) involved in the reported RED incident, this agreement must include details of the records the supplier intends to provide to the Home Office and the timeframes for this. A record of this meeting must also be kept by the Compliance Manager.

¹ Full list available at <https://www.gov.uk/topic/health-protection/infectious-diseases>

Amber incidents

17. **Amber** incidents must be reported by the supplier to the DES team officer. The senior manager or on call senior officer must report **Amber** incidents as soon as possible to the DES on call senior manager providing as much information as possible in line with the checklist at Annex A.

18. The DES senior manager or on call senior manager will provide advice as required and assess the information provided to ensure that appropriate action is being taken and will take a decision, dependent on the scale of the incident, when and how to update the deputy director or on-call duty director.

19. **Amber** incidents include;

- Successful breach of physical security
- Barricade / prevention of access by detained individuals
- Assault (violent or sexual) on a detained individual or member of staff where the police have been called
- Near death incidents (which include: acts of self harm, accidents, medical emergencies, assault or injury as a result of use of force which have required hospitalisation or the use of techniques to resuscitate an individual and which would have resulted in death within minutes had staff or circumstance not intervened)
- A planned demonstration outside of the centre
- Any demonstration by a group of detained individuals, including food and fluid refusal protest
- Media contact by a detained individual
- Attempts to abscond or escape - as defined in the previous paragraph – where physical security measures are overcome or weaknesses in security measures exposed.
- Major loss of services, water, electricity or gas
- Industrial action by supplier staff
- An assault of a child by either a detained individual, member of staff or visitor
- Any incident involving a high risk detained individual
- Key, lock (including handcuffs) or radio compromise

Wider communication of Red and Amber incidents

20. DES should make local arrangements with Independent Monitoring Boards on how **Red** and **Amber** incidents will be reported to them.

21. The DES officer will notify the local senior manager or on call senior manager of all **Red** and **Amber** incidents. It will be for the DEPMU on call officer to consider whether the incident has the potential to impact the management of the population in the individual IRC or wider estate and to escalate within the DEPMU senior management or on call structure as appropriate.

22. The DES senior manager or on call senior manager may instruct the DES duty security officer to inform all IRC, RSTHF or escorting officers of the incident so that they may notify the IRC supplier duty manager at their centre.

23. The DES deputy director or on call duty director will, as soon as practically possible, email details of **Red** and **Amber** incidents (Annex A provides an incident notification check list) to the Poise addresses in the table below. Where appropriate, the DES deputy director or on call duty director may amend the distribution list below if additional notifications are required or if he or she is satisfied that the handling and resolution of the incident do not require further immediate escalation.

24. The DES deputy director or on call duty director will take a decision on whether a conference call with key personnel is required to discuss the incident. In an incident which may require a wider IE response (beyond the detention estate) the DES deputy director or on call duty director and the IE on call director will discuss the incident and agree the most appropriate command structure.

25. The DES deputy director or on call duty director may escalate and transfer overall command of the incident to the IE on call director who will then assume what is known as Gold Command. In such circumstances the DES deputy director or on call duty director will assume a Silver Command function in respect of Detention and Escorting Services functions. This command structure is separate but will run in parallel with any comparable command structure initiated by a service provider or, in the event of mutual assistance having been sought, that of HMPPS.

26.

Red incidents (poise addresses)	Amber incidents (poise addresses)
Private Office – out of hours	Immigration Enforcement Secretariat
Immigration Minister’s Private Office	DGIE Private Office
Immigration Enforcement Secretariat	Director of Strategy, Transformation and Partnerships
DGIE Private Office	Press Office News Desk / SMT / Immigration Desk
IE on call director	Detention and Escorting Security Team (shared inbox)
Director of Strategy, Transformation and Partnerships	Detention Delivery Manager Security Lead
Director of Casework and Returns	Director of Casework and Returns
Press Office News Desk / SMT / Immigration Desk	
Immigration and Borders Secretariat	
National Command and Control Unit CIO	
Detention and Escorting Security Team (shared inbox)	
Detention Delivery Manager Security Lead	

27. The DES on call duty director or IE on call director (whoever is in command) will consider, and if appropriate, commission an internal review or independent investigation into Red and Amber incidents.

28. All **Red** and **Amber** incidents must additionally be notified to the relevant case work SMT and the DET: Notification should be made to the relevant casework area using the numbers provided in the Border, Immigration and Citizenship weekly duty rota (e.g. National Returns Command, Criminal Casework). All out of hours emails should be copied to the relevant case work G6 and G7, for the NRC the following email address should be used NRCDetainedCaseworkG76@homeoffice.gov.uk

Special arrangements for notifying a death in detention

29. In the event of a death in detention certain additional notifications must be undertaken without undue delay (as set out in DSO 08/2014 Deaths in Detention).

External assistance (for Red incidents)

30. Where, on the recommendation of an IRC supplier, external aid is to be requested from HMPPS or Police Scotland, the DES deputy director or on call senior manager should

alert the National Operations Unit using the single incident number which is published with the weekly on call contact details.

31. For incidents that require mutual assistance the DES on call duty director will normally attend the HMPPS Incident Suite to advise the HMPPS Gold Commander. The DES on call duty director will decide where the on call senior manager should attend in the interests of co-ordinating IE activity.

32. Different arrangements for mutual assistance are in place in Scotland. In the case of a disturbance in Dungavel House, Police Scotland will provide mutual aid. The on call duty director will provide advice to the Police Scotland Gold Commander to assist in the management of the incident.

Green incidents

33. **Green** incidents occurring out of office hours do not need to be reported through the out of hours on call structure **unless** the incident is likely to attract press interest in which case it should be treated as an **Amber** incident.

- **Green** incidents may include:
- Drug or alcohol finds in small quantities
- Minor fights between detained individuals
- Damage to property
- Weapons finds
- Theft
- Breach of Internet security
- A detained individual making an age dispute claim.

34. During office hours such incidents should be reported as normal to the Compliance manager or their deputy verbally in the first instance, then followed up by a local incident report or Security Information Report (SIR) within 24 hours.

Continuing incidents

35. In the event of a prolonged incident the on-call senior manager dealing with the incident will liaise with the on call duty director regarding the provision of alternative on call senior manager for the rest of the estate.

36. For incidents requiring continuing management the on-call duty director may decide to open an incident suite in either the Home Office Croydon estate, DEPMU or 2MS. A room with facilities and support will be designated in these locations to manage the incident.

This will be in addition to any incident suite that may be opened by the centre supplier at the affected IRC. The on-call duty director will determine how the IE incident suite will be staffed and by who.

37. **Red** or **Amber** incidents may start during office hours and continue out of office hours (or vice versa). It is essential when this happens that an effective handover of the situation is passed on to the appropriate officers to ensure that they are aware of how the incident has been managed up to that point.

38. **Red** and **Amber** incidents that start during office hours should be escalated by Compliance manager or their deputy (or other team member) to the area manager responsible for that centre, who will then escalate further as appropriate. Should the severity of the incident have the potential to impact on other centres in the detention estate the local Compliance team manager, their deputy or another delegated member of the Compliance team on site will assume the responsibility for calling the Compliance teams at other IRCs to advise them of the circumstances of the incident.

Reporting incidents occurring on charter flights

39. Returns Logistics (RL) Charter Team (RL Charters) is operationally responsible for reporting and communicating incidents and have their own command structure for each flight. This reporting structure is activated;

- a) once the charter flight escort provider has left a centre and the RL flight Chief Immigration Officer (CIO) is contacted by the Senior Security Officer (SSO) or an Assistant Security Officer regarding an incident; and
- b) in any event, once the flight CIO has arrived at the port of departure and met face to face with escorts, medics and returnees.

40. Where a flight CIO is notified or becomes aware of an incident in accordance with points (a) or (b) above, that information is immediately passed on to the RL Charters flight silver commander for possible escalation. The escalation route will be to the gold commander who will determine whether the incident is sufficiently serious to notify either the Deputy Director of Returns Logistics or the Director of Casework and Returns.

Before flight departure

41. Before the charter flight's departure, the SSO will notify the DEPMU Duty Officer of all incidents involving self harm and/or use of control and restraint occurring before and during boarding. Any serious incident that has the potential for wider impact will be reported by the flight CIO without delay to the RL Charters flight silver commander for possible escalation to the gold commander. The gold commander will determine whether the incident is sufficiently serious to notify either the Deputy Director of Returns Logistics or the Director of Casework and Returns.

Mid-Flight / Disembarkation incidents

42. Prior to departure for the return journey, the SSO will call the DEPMU Duty Officer to report all incidents involving self-harm or use of control and restraint that occurred after departure or during disembarkation. Any serious incident that has the potential for wider impact will be reported by the flight CIO without delay to the RL Charters flight silver commander on landing at the final destination or where an unscheduled landing is made. The silver commander will determine whether the incident should be notified to the gold commander. The gold commander will then consider if the incident is sufficiently serious to notify either the Deputy Director of Returns Logistics or the Director of Casework and Returns.

Post incident reporting (All)

41. At the conclusion of a reportable incident, IRC suppliers will provide a factual summary of the incident to the Compliance Manager. This report must include a time line of key events, actions, interventions and notifications occurring and the outcome / lessons learned from any post incident de-briefs within 24 hours. A summary of all incident reports, observations from CCTV or body worn cameras, interviews or other intelligence gathered must be made available to the Compliance Manager as soon as operationally possible.

42. The Home Office Compliance Manager will escalate daily to the local Area and Delivery Manager (SEO and Grade 7) a summary of all **Red** and **Amber** incidents. A summary of **Green** incidents reported by the supplier must also be escalated to the local Area and Delivery Manager when further investigation is considered appropriate by the Compliance Manager as soon as possible.

43. A DEPMU Duty Manager will escalate all **Red** and **Amber** incidents, or **Green** incidents considered to require further investigation, to a DEPMU senior manager (Grade 7).

Revision History

Review date	Reviewed by	Review outcome	Next review
March 2016	Gillian Foley	Expansion of notifications for Red and Amber incidents and clarification on primacy of national versus detention on call structures	March 2017
May 2016	Emily Jarvis	Amendments to wider internal communications section	May 2018
March 2017	Jose Domingos	Reformat and corrections to the contact details of wider stakeholders and incident rating	July 2019
June 2020	Shadia Ali	Updated to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the distribution of roles between Compliance teams and DETs • taken out of hours element to include incidents at all hours 	June 2022
March 2021	Kevin Teefey	Updated actions for Supplier and Compliance Teams following reported RED incidents.	June 2022