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About the Detainee Locator / FAQs

What information does ICE collect about me when I use the ODLS website?

ODLS collects limited information about you when you use the system. You do not need to set up an account, provide any information about yourself, or get special permission to use the system. When you visit the website, the system does collect limited technical information including your Internet domain, Internet Protocol (IP) address, and the Internet address of the website from which you linked directly to the ODLS website. This information is collected to allow ICE to troubleshoot issues with the system and to monitor and protect the system from cyber-attacks. It is not used to identify people who use ODLS, to track what they search in the system, or to assist with immigration enforcement activities.

Additionally, the ODLS website uses session cookies. Session cookies are small bits of text that do not collect any information about you but are used to track you and help you while you navigate throughout the ODLS website. The cookies only last for the duration of an active browser session and once you close your browser or your browser has been inactive on the website for 20 minutes, the cookie is deleted.

For more information on the limited technical information that is collected and on the session cookies that are used, please see the ODLS privacy policy.

What is an A-Number?

The A-Number (short for Alien Registration Number) is the nine-digit identifying number that is assigned to a person during immigration benefits or enforcement proceedings. The nine-digit A-Number may be preceded by zeros. A-Numbers are assigned one per person. The A-Number can be found in the top right corner of the Notice to Appear (NTA), Form I-862.

Does ODLS have information about all persons in ICE custody?

No. ODLS does not contain information about all persons in ICE custody. For example, juveniles (detainees under the age of 18) and persons released from ICE custody more than 60 days ago are not in the system. The ODLS contains information about current adult detainees and persons released from detention (for any reason, including removal) within the last 60 days.

Can I use ODLS to find out if an immigration detainer has issued for a person in local custody?

No. If you have questions about immigration detainers for specific individuals, contact the ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).

What does the response "not in custody" mean?

It means the person was released from ICE custody within the last 60 days for any of the following reasons:

- Removed from or voluntarily departed the United States,
- Released from custody pending the outcome of their case,
- Released into the United States due to the resolution of the immigration case (e.g., grant of an immigration benefit that permits the person to remain in the country), or
- Transferred into the custody of another law enforcement or custodial agency.

Family members and legal representatives may be able to obtain additional information about a person's case by contacting the ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) responsible for that person's immigration case. (The responsible ERO field office's contact information is displayed in the ODLS record for that person.)

How current is the information in ODLS?

ODLS information may be anywhere from 20 minutes to eight hours old. ICE policy requires that its systems be updated within eight hours of the release, removal, or transfer of detainees. In most cases, detainee information is updated more quickly, but people planning to visit a detainee should call ahead to the detention facility to confirm the detainee is still at that location.

Does ODLS show when a detainee is being transferred between facilities?

No. For security reasons, ODLS does not provide information about transfers that are planned or in progress. Once a person is transferred and booked into another ICE detention facility, ODLS will be updated with that information.

How do I find out if a person was removed from the United States?

ODLS does not reveal whether a person was removed. The system will only reveal if a person is currently in ICE custody or was released from ICE custody within the last 60 days. Family members and legal representatives may be able to obtain

additional information about a persons removal status by contacting the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) responsible for that persons immigration case. (The responsible ERO offices contact information is displayed in the persons ODLS record. Alternatively, you may contact the ERO office in the area where you believe the persons immigration case was initiated.)

I can't find the person in ODLS. What should I do?

First, re-check the search terms you entered to ensure they are correct, and try your query again. Please remember the system does not provide information for some persons such as juveniles (detainees under the age of 18) or persons were released from custody more than 60 days ago.

- If you conducted a name-based search, remember that only exact matches to the name you entered will be returned. You may want to try searching using any name or spelling variants used by the person.
- If you conducted an A-Number search, you may want to try conducting a name-based search instead.
- If you do not have a correct country of birth, you will not be able to find the person in ODLS.

If you are unable to find the detainee using ODLS, please contact the ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) in the area where you believe the persons immigration case was initiated.

What is the best search method when using ODLS?

Searching for a detainee by A-Number will return a better match.

Can I visit a detainee once I have located them in the system?

If the status of the detainee shows "In Custody," select the "Current Detention Facility" link which will provide the contact information for the detention facility where the detainee is being held. You should contact the detention facility to confirm the detainee is still at that location prior to visiting.

What type of information will I need to visit a detainee in a detention facility?

A government-issued photo identification or other identification when photo identification is unavailable for religious reasons is required to visit a detention facility. However, you should contact the detention facility you plan to visit in order to find out what their policies and regulations are regarding visitation.