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## INFORMATION RELEASE

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### **Juneau Police Department explains policy on checking immigration status**

In response to questions from the public, Juneau Police Chief Bryce Johnson said the number one priority for the Juneau Police Department is public safety; not an individual's immigration status.

"It's a big deal nationally, but for us here, it isn't something we need to consume ourselves with," Johnson said. "People committing crimes in Juneau are usually not immigrants or people you would need to consult ICE for."

Continuing to follow its protocols and policies, JPD doesn't have federal authority to enforce immigration laws. The department isn't part of the federal program – known as 287(g) – that partners state or local law enforcement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Johnson said JPD doesn't check people's immigration status when they're contacted or arrested. "That is not something we are investigating," he said.

If, through an investigation of other crimes, JPD determines a suspect is undocumented, that information can be shared with ICE. Those instances are rare, Johnson said, and Juneau's remoteness often hampers federal involvement.

Johnson added, "We want to assure undocumented individuals who are victims of crime that they can call us to make a police report. We don't investigate immigration status in crimes like domestic violence."

If ICE were to ask JPD for assistance, Johnson said he'd weigh the request against JPD's available resources and priorities.

"My philosophy is to be a good law enforcement partner with our neighbors, state, and federal authorities," he said. "If ICE were to ask us for help, we would do what we were legally able to do to help them within the context of the resources we have. This is the same answer for any other law enforcement agency looking for help from us."

Johnson said he'd err on the side of public safety. "If it makes sense for public safety, and we had the resources available, we'd help out."

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