



Handling ICE Encounters at Soccer Games

Prepared for Youth and Community Soccer Organizations in Oregon

Purpose and Scope

Youth soccer events are intended to be safe, inclusive community spaces. This document provides guidance on how to respond appropriately and lawfully to ICE encounters at soccer games, how organizations can reduce fear or intimidation of families, and how to plan ahead to ensure calm, orderly operations. This guidance does not encourage interference with law enforcement or concealment of individuals.

Understanding the Basics: Rights and Boundaries

Most soccer fields and parks are public spaces. However, event organizers may designate certain areas as private or restricted for safety and operational purposes. Individuals have the right to remain silent and decline to answer questions. ICE must have a judicial warrant signed by a judge to enter private or restricted areas without consent.

Oregon-Specific Legal Context

Oregon law limits the use of state and local resources for federal immigration enforcement. Local law enforcement agencies in Oregon generally do not assist ICE with civil immigration enforcement unless required by a judicial warrant or court order. Youth sports organizations are not required to collect, retain, or share immigration status information, and should not do so as part of normal operations.

Handling ICE Presence During an Event

Designate an Event Point Person. Centralize communication, engage respectfully, request to see a judicial warrant if access to restricted areas is requested, and continue event operations unless safety is at risk.

Preventing Families from Feeling Threatened

Establish a culture of safety, train volunteers to remain calm and neutral, manage physical space carefully, and use trauma-informed approaches that avoid speculation or unnecessary attention.

Creating Private or Restricted Spaces

Private or restricted spaces are areas where access is limited for event operations, player safety, or medical care. These areas require consent or a judicial warrant for law enforcement entry.

Examples of Private Spaces

Team-Only Areas: Rope off areas, require credentials, and post clear signage.

Operations Zones: Use tents or rooms marked as private event operations.

Medical Areas: Clearly labeled and restricted for health and safety purposes.

Check-In Areas: Administrative zones separated from public flow.

Locker Rooms: Inherently private changing areas.

Creating Private or Restricted Spaces at Soccer Events

How to Lawfully Limit Access Without Interfering With Law Enforcement

One of the most effective ways to reduce disruption and protect families is to clearly establish which areas of an event are **public** and which are **private or restricted**. This is a standard event-management practice used for safety, insurance, and operational control—and it applies equally in situations involving law enforcement.

What “Private Space” Means in an Event Context

A private or restricted space is an area where access is limited by the event organizer for specific purposes (e.g., player safety, medical care, staff operations). Even when located within a public park, these areas are treated as private for the duration of the event.

Law enforcement, including ICE, **may not enter private or restricted areas without consent or a judicial warrant signed by a judge**, unless exigent circumstances exist (e.g., immediate threat to life).

Practical Examples of Creating Private Spaces

Example 1: Team-Only Areas

How to establish it

- Use signage stating:
“Team and Credentialed Staff Only – No Public Access”
- Rope off or cone the area.
- Require wristbands, badges, or uniforms for entry.

Why it matters

- This clearly communicates that the area is not open to the general public.
- Event staff can lawfully deny entry to anyone without credentials, including law enforcement lacking a judicial warrant.

Example 2: Operations and Event Management Zones

How to establish it

- Designate a tent, trailer, or room as “Event Operations.”
- Post signage such as:
“Private Event Operations Area – Authorized Personnel Only”
- Keep rosters, radios, schedules, and sensitive materials inside.

Why it matters

- This creates a defensible private space for decision-making.
- If ICE requests entry, staff can ask for a judicial warrant before allowing access.

Example 3: Medical and Player Safety Areas

How to establish it

- Label clearly as “Medical Area” or “Player Care Area.”
- Restrict access to medical staff, players, and guardians.
- Use privacy screens or tents when possible.

Why it matters

- Medical and safety zones are universally recognized as restricted.
- Entry without authorization can be denied absent a judicial warrant.

Example 4: Check-In and Credentialing Points

How to establish it

- Position check-in tables behind cones or barriers.
- Use signage indicating:
“Event Check-In – Private Administrative Area”
- Do not place check-in tables in general spectator flow.

Why it matters

- Prevents casual access to personal information.
- Reinforces that administrative areas are not public gathering spaces.

Example 5: Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

How to establish it

- Post signage stating:
“Private Changing Area – No Public Entry”
- Control access through staff or volunteers.

Why it matters

- Locker rooms are inherently private.
- Entry without consent requires a judicial warrant.

What Staff Should Say (and Not Say)

Appropriate Language for Denying Entry

If an agent requests access to a restricted area, the event point person may calmly state:

- “This is a private event space. Do you have a judicial warrant authorizing entry?”
- “I do not consent to entry into this restricted area without a warrant signed by a judge.”
- “Our policy requires legal review of any warrant before access is granted.”

This language is firm, lawful, and non-confrontational.

What Staff Should Not Say

- Do not argue about immigration policy.

- Do not speculate about individuals.
- Do not claim the organization is “hiding” anyone.
- IMPORTANT: Do not physically block or touch agents.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Failing to Mark Spaces Clearly

Unmarked areas may be treated as public by default.

2. Allowing Casual Access

If spectators, vendors, or media freely enter an area, it may lose its private designation.

3. Letting Multiple People Speak

Only the event point-person should engage with law enforcement.

4. Over-Explaining

You are not required to justify why an area is private—only to state that it is.

Key Takeaway

Creating private or restricted spaces is not about confrontation or defiance—it is about professional event management. Clear boundaries:

- Reduce fear and confusion,
- Protect player welfare,
- Preserve organizational integrity, and

- Ensure that any law enforcement interaction occurs lawfully and appropriately.

When done correctly, these practices allow soccer events to proceed calmly and safely while respecting both the law and the dignity of families.

REMINDERS

Appropriate Language for Denying Entry

Staff may state: “This is a private event space. Do you have a judicial warrant authorizing entry?” or “I do not consent to entry without a warrant signed by a judge.”

Planning Ahead

Designate roles, establish written protocols, know the venue, prepare calm messaging, avoid overreaction, and document incidents factually after the event.

Key Principles

Safety first. Calm is contagious. Centralize authority. Know your rights and limits. Plan ahead.

Nonprofit Disclaimer

This document is provided for informational and educational purposes only and is intended for use by nonprofit youth sports organizations. It does not constitute legal advice. Laws and enforcement practices may change, and application may vary based on specific circumstances. Organizations are encouraged to consult qualified legal counsel to review policies and procedures and to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.