

Repatriation Strategy and Policy Executive Coordination Team

FACT SHEET

Building on the principles of co-responsibility and co-management of our shared border espoused in coordination mechanisms like the 21st Century Border Management Initiative and the High Level Economic Dialogue the United States and Mexico created the Repatriation Strategy and Policy Executive Coordination Team (RESPECT). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, and the Secretariat of Governance of Mexico co-lead RESPECT, which also includes the participation of other DHS components, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Migration Institute of Mexico (INM).

RESPECT is a policy-level decision making body which provides oversight and guidance on repatriation issues at the agency executive level by analyzing, evaluating and developing policies and procedures which improve the efficiency of repatriation processes for Mexican nationals, while ensuring a safe, humane, orderly, and respectful return to Mexico. RESPECT has met five times, most recently on November 3, 2016, where significant accomplishments were noted, which included:

- Enhanced coordination processes for repatriations.
- Expansion of the Interior Repatriation Initiative.
- Improved handling of personal property for Mexican nationals who are being repatriated.
- Increased visibility and exchange of information regarding detention facilities, specifically in regards to medical care.
- Identified new options to better address family separation in the repatriation process.

Perhaps the most significant achievement of RESPECT, completed through the Repatriation Technical Working Group, was the signing of the nine border region Local Repatriation Arrangements. The Arrangements were signed by Consulates of Mexico, the National Migration Institute of Mexico, and local U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) authorities. This signing concluded a year-long review which streamlined the times and locations for repatriations along the U.S.-Mexico border. Both governments agreed to 12 repatriation locations (11 along the U.S.-Mexico border and one at the Mexico City International Airport). The Arrangements also establish that repatriations are to occur during daytime hours with the allowance of operational exceptions, provided the exceptions are properly coordinated with the appropriate authorities.

In addition, for the first time, the nine Local Repatriation Arrangements include processes for dealing with the personal belongings of repatriated Mexican nationals, family separation, and greater collaboration on handling unaccompanied minors.

RESPECT continues to work together in the following areas:

- Both governments will continue to work internally on the return of difficult medical cases to Mexico.
- Both governments are working together to facilitate visits by Mexican consular officials to ICE detention centers.

- Continue to explore what options might best impact family separation challenges.
- Coordination with other agencies on the handling and return of personal property of Mexican nationals who are being repatriated.
- Bilateral training sessions between CBP and ICE personnel and Mexican consular officers.
- Signing of the 17 Local Repatriation Arrangements for interior repatriation locations.