

Criminal Alien Identification System (CAIS)

Deputy Superintendent William M. Casey
Assistant Chief, Bureau of Administrative Services

Criminal Alien Identification System (CAIS) is an ongoing partnership that includes the Boston Police Department (BPD), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Probation Department. ICE recently came into being as a result of the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, previously the role involving ICE in CAIS was performed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

The concept behind CAIS is simple. When an individual is arrested for any crime by the BPD they are electronically fingerprinted. The fingerprint data is electronically sent to the FBI where a fingerprint based identification and comparison is made against the estimated 45 million fingerprints electronically stored by the FBI. This process is fully automated and takes approximately twenty minutes to complete. Because the Boston Police Department was the first agency to electronically send fingerprints to the FBI, and has been doing so for approximately seven years, the Department is experienced with this program and performs efficiently.

After the FBI compares the fingerprint to its database, it forwards identification information back to the Boston Police. If the individual upon being arrested self reported that they were born outside of the Country or if the fingerprint identification determines that the individual was not born in this country the information on that individual is then automatically routed to ICE. This routing is performed automatically by the CAIS application. The CAIS application was provided free of charge by a Boston based company called xFact, Inc. The information is routed to ICE which then processes the fingerprint based identification information in a timely fashion and forwards relevant immigration information to the Boston Police, Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and the Probation Department prior to the arrestee's criminal arraignment. This process allows the arraigning court to consider the ICE data at the time of arraignment primarily to address two situations: either the individual arrested has been previously deported and has returned illegally or the individual arrested has an outstanding order for deportation. It also allows for dialogue between ICE, the District Attorney's, Probation Officers and Boston Police Officers prior to the arraignment as to how to proceed with the case. In some cases criminal charges can be dropped and the individual turned over to ICE for removal proceedings thus saving time and resources for all the agencies involved.

CAIS was implemented on May 20, 2002. During that time frame:

- 19 individuals were identified as illegal re-entries after deportation;
- 72 individuals were identified as having outstanding warrants of removal;
- 17 individuals were identified as having other issues with INS that warranted their being held for removal.

In total CAIS has identified 108 individuals who ICE has pursued for criminal violations of immigration law and eventual removal from the Country. Sergeant Detective Jeffrey Walcott, Sergeant Michael Donovan, Detective Joseph Dahlbeck, Police Officer Kevin Griffiths, Police Officer Vincent Stancato, James Fitzpatrick, Marilyn Sferrazza, Kerry Woods, Eillen Griffin and Sandra Tanner were all critical in the success of this program.