

**Disclaimer: there might be typos, incomplete information, and other inaccuracies - sorry!**

## **TL; DR**

- **Carry all of your immigration documents all the time**
- **Don't lead ICE to your friends, lock the doors, call MIT police**
- **Read the general information and guides from MIT homepage**
- **Don't travel if you don't have to. If you do need/want to travel, talk to IScho, your lawyers, your PI, your department to be fully informed on the risks and have a backup plan**

**4/11/2025**

## **Webinar with Immigration Attorney**

Mark Divincenzo: Vice president and general counsel

MIT home page and OGC website has documents

- <https://web.mit.edu/response-government-activity/>
- Guidance and what to do when traveling, encountering law enforcement, etc.

Bottom line:

- Call MIT police immediately and be polite to law enforcement officials
- Police will call school attorney and make sure they have the authority and have little disruption on campus

MIT does NOT share information for community members except

- Individual had given consent
- As visa sponsor MIT needs to give routine information only
- Legal circumstance (subpoena etc), will alert OGC and will let the student/community member know

Legal resources

- OGC represents MIT but not individual community members
- But can provide referrals and guidance
- Has been working with expert immigration lawyers
- Initial consultation requires modest fee but you may get financial support when discussed with OGC

John DiFava: Chief of Police

- MIT police doesn't work for federal gov and won't enforce immigration policy
- Do not assist locating
- Won't share individual information, only basic logistical information (including accompanying the authority)

## Dan Berger: a lawyer

> [National Immigration Forum](#) - subscribe for daily update

- Get in contact with IScho, they probably know when to refer to a lawyer
- Non-citizen: carry your documents, update your address!
  - Double check with IScho and make sure your documents reflect your status!
- Border
  - Follow campus protocol on what you can carry/in your computer/cloud server
  - Delete files, don't connect to cloud
  - Additional advice from PDA: Get a clean loaner laptop from IS&T for traveling  
<https://ist.mit.edu/secure-devices-travel>
- Legal services
  - Look on immigrant advocates if you are worried about finding non-profit/pro bono attorney services
- National level:
  - This is a new issue in the last 5 years
  - The courts are involved - will be a lot of litigation on this

## Pre-submitted question (broader concerns only):

- Call immigration lawyer, IScho can help with referral
- Reasons visa revoked:
  - Dan: fast moving situation
    - Didn't expect this could happen, thought it was about Gaza conflict, then went to more broader
    - Sevis tracks F and J visas,
      - A database controlled by ICE
      - Algorithms used to mine the data and look for red flags, printout for each person what should be checked out by an officer
      - It seems like the last step was taken out so no one was double checking on the algorithm
        - Can be flagged for most random issues
      - Now: sudden termination, no obvious pattern, probably AI randomly flagging, lack of double checking
      - The state department is canceling VISAs leads to terminate SEVIS
        - The school can monitor termination and reasons
          - Probably a dual process violation
- Once VISA was terminated - Arrested? Can you still drive?
  - MIT police won't enforce immigration laws
  - Some police department will cooperate ICE
    - If pulled over in certain towns, police officer could communicate with ICE and have you flagged - not yet happening in Mass (update: it's happening in Mass now)
      - <https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements>

- Be careful for undocumented family members if they want to travel to see you e.g. for your graduation
  - Motor violation:
    - Just follow traffic laws, not much else you can do
- Can I check my SEVIS record myself
  - NO - IScho is checking for us
  - But if you are contacted by ICE, inform IScho immediately!
    - If you were informed it might not be sent to an active email address, it might go to your previous email used when you applied for visa
  - If you have an immigration attorney, involve them
  - Scams
    - Contact IScho to determine if the request is legitimate even if they seem adamant
- What happens if my visa is revoked
  - No longer in valid status for ICE, should I go or stay?
    - Dan: Some choose to leave and not have risk or concern about ICE arrest or detention
      - But once you leave, you need re-apply for new visa
        - These people haven't been back to the US yet
        - The risk is not knowing how long the process take to come back
          - Possible security delays
          - Probably won't be able to apply for benefit like OPT
    - People whose visa got revoked haven't been arrested
    - File individual lawsuit
      - New Hampshire case
        - SEVIS records ordered to be re-opened but administration might push back on this
      - Find a lawyer!
        - The law firms are filing a national level lawsuit
          - This might take time
    - Mark:
      - Doesn't mean you HAVE TO leave
      - Students: You can stay in MIT housing and attend classes
      - Employees: But you CAN'T be employed by MIT any more - you could be detained and arrested for it
        - Work with PI to see what can be applied to you
- Can I stay a MIT student?
  - Generally expect students to be physically present
  - But this is considered an absolute barrier, will support this type of situation
    - Talk to IScho and discuss possibility of remote learning/research
      - Where you are in your program, what can be done remotely
      - This has happened during covid too so they know what to do
  - Talk to the general counsel and your own lawyers about options too

- On MIT campus, what areas can law enforcement access?
  - MIT is an open campus
  - Open buildings are public areas - everyone can access
  - Private offices and classrooms and dorms need to be accessed with warrant
    - Any space with card access
  - Look at the homepage links to know what to do when encountering agents
    - Call MIT police, don't let the agents in and don't lead them to who they are searching for!
- Trends of on campus arrests
  - Not a lot of cases
  - ICE now has legal basis of arrest/detention for minor issues
- Travel advice
  - Recommendation: VISA and green card holders
    - Postpone international travel
      - There might be grand travel bans coming up
        - Might get stuck abroad
    - Reach out to IScho if you have to travel, fully informed about risks and a backup plan
    - Domestic travel
      - Not really an issue BUT with additional requirements
      - Carry all original immigration documents with you all time
      - Can be risky in US territories/states with long flights
        - Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, Virgin Island, etc.
      - If don't have valid visa for return
        - Staffing shortage might hinder your ability to get a new visa
        - Potential consulate closure abroad
  - Read the travel guide carefully, know what to prepare, talk to IScho
  - Talk to your department to discuss the possibility of delay
  - Summer plans
    - Possible travel ban
    - Might want to discuss with Career advising development for domestic opportunities instead
  - Don't take travel risks if you are not comfortable!
- My visa expired, what should I do?
  - Might be delays at US consulates and embassies due to staff shortage
  - No way to renew US visa in the US
  - Consult IScho if you HAVE TO travel
  - Green card holder and US citizens should reach out to attorney, IScho can help with referrals
- What if detained at US point of entry
  - Read the MIT guidance
  - Border agents can search your luggages and electronic devices, even for citizens
  - You don't have to let them search, but you might get detained longer
  - Stay calm, be truthful

- They may seize your devices if you resist, but it's your choice
  - Visa holders can be denied entry if you resist
- Emergency numbers on IScho website for assistance
- Secondary inspection is common
  - they don't have access to SEVIS
  - Normally very short inspection,
  - Might be able to call someone, if you have the opportunity, call IScho emergency number!
    - > Emergency numbers: ISchO (617-253-2888) and ISO (617-258-5480)
  - But accessing to an attorney might not be possible during the questions
    - Consult IScho BEFORE you travel, have all your documents ready
- Electronic devices
  - Know what files you have, provide social media account and access
- Template in guidance links
  - MIT letterhead showing the reason of traveling
  - Get it signed by your department and IScho
  - Get a letter from your PI/IScho if you are applying for new VISA stamp abroad
- Don't get nervous when you are detained!
  - Some people give long complicated answers
    - Not recommended
      - Be simple, one sentence answer
  - Don't lie
    - Show them you are cooperating, and you have nothing to hide
    - If you are worried about something, don't say it and consult attorney
    - Bring granola bars for your kids if you might be detained with kids
- What can I do to support international members?
  - Reach out and offer help
  - Look for their sign of stress