



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

Office of Public Affairs

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Contact: [CBP Media Relations](#)

(202) 344-1780

CBP announces February 2021 Operational Update

WASHINGTON — U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) today released operational statistics for February 2021, which can be viewed [here](#).

February marked the start of processing for migrants with active cases under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) through three ports of entry. To date, CBP has processed 1,500 individuals through this phased program. Migrants are required to go through a staging and COVID-19 testing process before entry. If individuals appear at the port of entry without going through this process, they are not admitted. CBP also conducts biometric checks to confirm that individuals do not pose a threat to the American public. Anyone who poses a national security or public safety threat is detained and removed according to existing protocols.

“The United States is continuing to strictly enforce our existing immigration laws and border security measures,” said CBP Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner Troy Miller. “Those who attempt to cross the border without going through ports of entry should understand that they are putting themselves and their families in danger, especially during the pandemic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the border is not open, and the vast majority of people are being returned under Title 42. Do not believe smugglers or others claiming otherwise.”

CBP Enforcement Numbers

In February 2021, CBP encountered 100,441 persons attempting entry along the Southwest border. This total represented a 28 percent increase over January 2021. CBP completed 72,113 expulsions from the border pursuant to CDC guidance under Title 42 authority.

The number of encounters at the border has been rising since April 2020 due to ongoing violence, natural disasters, food insecurity, and poverty in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America. As it always has, the number of individuals crossing the border continues to fluctuate and CBP adapts accordingly.

CBP enforcement numbers for February 2021 can be found [here](#).

Unaccompanied Children

Beginning in April 2020, CBP has seen an increase in encounters of unaccompanied children from Central America at the Southwest Border.

In Fiscal Year 2021 through February, 29,792 unaccompanied children and single minors have been encountered along the Southwest Border. Two thousand nine hundred and forty-two of these children are under the age of 12 years old and 26,850 are aged 13-17 years old.

DHS has continued its close coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as it increases its capacity to care for unaccompanied children and place them with sponsors. Our goal is to ensure that CBP has the continued capability to efficiently transfer unaccompanied children to HHS as quickly as possible, consistent with legal requirements and the best interest of the children.

Addressing unaccompanied children crossing our southwest border is an important priority of this Administration. It requires a coordinated and sustained whole-of-government response.

Drug Seizures

CBP officers, Border Patrol agents, and Air and Marine Operations agents continued to interdict the flow of illicit narcotics across the border. Nationwide, drug seizures increased 50 percent in February from January 2021. Cocaine interceptions decreased 13 percent. Seizures of methamphetamine increased 40 percent. Seizures of heroin went up 48 percent and seizures of fentanyl decreased by 17 percent.

Despite the slight drop for February, CBP is seeing a drastic increase in fentanyl seizures this fiscal year – more than 360 percent higher than this same time last year. For all Fiscal Year 2020, CBP intercepted more than 4,700 pounds. Just five months into this year, CBP has seized more than 5,000 pounds.

Additional CBP drug seizure statistics can be found [here](#).

Life-saving Rescues

CBP continued to perform a large number of rescues of citizens and migrants in February 2021, with more than 893 rescues nationwide. Over the past year, CBP agents and officers have rescued more than 7,600 individuals, regardless of their circumstance or status.

Effects of COVID-19 on CBP Personnel

The safety of our workforce, our communities, and those in our care is a top priority. CBP personnel put themselves and their families at risk with every encounter at the border. Since the start of the pandemic, more than 8,000 CBP employees have tested positive for COVID-19, and 27 have died.

CBP is focused on providing access to the COVID-19 vaccine to our workforce and is collaborating with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Homeland Security to expedite the delivery of vaccinations to personnel. To date, based on self-reporting, at least 23 percent of CBP's front line personnel have been vaccinated.

Our policy is to protect our national and border security, address the humanitarian challenges at the U.S.-Mexico border, and ensure public health and safety.

DHS and CBP are working with local mayors and public health officials to provide COVID-19 testing and, as needed, isolation and quarantine for families released from Border Patrol facilities.

Trade and Counterfeit Seizures

CBP continues to collaborate with federal partners and the trade community to facilitate the importation of legitimate medical supplies and other goods necessary for the COVID-19 response while verifying that those goods are authorized and safe for use. As part of that effort, CBP is interdicting fraudulent and unauthorized goods that could harm the health and safety of Americans. Since the pandemic began until the end of February, CBP had seized more than:

- 177,500 FDA-prohibited COVID-19 test kits in 414 incidents. These items were either prohibited for not meeting legal requirements, or they were potentially unlicensed,
- 30 million counterfeit face masks seized in 611 incidents,
- 37,000 EPA-prohibited anti-virus lanyards in 118 incidents,
- 38,000 FDA-prohibited chloroquine tablets in 229 incidents,
- 6,000 tablets of antibiotics, such as azithromycin in 108 incidents, and
- 300,000 containers of hand sanitizer in 36 incidents.

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.