



# CBP Statement on Death in Custody at Harlingen Station

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CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) is investigating the tragic death of a 29-year-old woman in U.S. Border Patrol custody which occurred on August 27, 2023, in Harlingen, TX. Consistent with agency [policy](#) and CBP's commitment to transparency and accountability, we are sharing information about this incident as quickly as possible. CBP OPR will continue to review this matter as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible and CBP anticipates releasing additional information in the coming days. Information below is based on an initial review of records and video by CBP's OPR and will be subject to verification as part of the investigative process.

On Sunday, August 27, 2023, at approximately 8:30 p.m., an adult female citizen of Honduras and her two children (aged four and six) were taken into custody by Border Patrol agents (BPAs) assigned to the McAllen, Texas, Border Patrol Station. They were apprehended as part of a larger group of 15 noncitizens who had crossed into the United States illegally approximately 3.72 miles west of the Hidalgo Port of Entry and .8 miles south of the Anzalduas Port of Entry complex. CBP records indicate the noncitizen group was manifested for transport at approximately 8:41 p.m. The family arrived at the U.S. Border Patrol Donna Processing Facility (DPF) in Donna, TX, at approximately 11:02 p.m.

A review of agency records by CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) indicates that, while at the Donna Processing Facility, the woman and her children were medically screened and were cleared for travel. The records do not indicate that any medical issues were identified for the woman, nor that she experienced any medical issues while at the DPF.

On Monday, August 28, 2023, at approximately 7:17 a.m., the woman and her children were transported from the Donna Processing Facility to the Harlingen Border Patrol Station for further processing. The woman and her children arrived at Harlingen Station at 8:02 a.m. on a bus along with approximately 40 other noncitizens. OPR reviewed video footage and determined the non-citizens were lined up alongside the bus in the sally port area and the sole medical provider on-duty, a CBP-contracted EMT-Basic, systematically conducted medical screenings of each noncitizen. There is no indication from the video review that the woman expressed any concerns or that she appeared to be in distress during the medical screening process. The medical screening process concluded at

8:20 a.m., and the group entered Harlingen Station at 8:23 a.m. After entering the station, the woman can be seen picking up boxed meals and entering a cell along with her children and approximately 34 other noncitizens at approximately 8:25 a.m. The woman is not seen on video again until approximately 11:45 a.m. when she steps out of the cell briefly to retrieve three meal boxes.

Because of intermittent system outages in the e3 detention module, which took place during the duration of this incident, certain events such as welfare checks were entered retroactively based on the recollection of the personnel involved. To ensure accurate reporting, CBP OPR reviewed video footage for the duration of time the woman was in custody at Harlingen Station. This revealed that BPAs conducted visual checks by looking into the window of her cell at 8:55 a.m., 9:19 a.m., 9:57 a.m., 10:37 a.m., 11:42 a.m., 12:36 p.m., 1:45 p.m., and 1:52 p.m. At 3:18 p.m. a BPA opened the door of the cell and spoke with a noncitizen briefly.

At approximately 3:58 p.m., BPAs approached the cell with meals for the noncitizens and opened the cell door. At this point, the noncitizens in the cell began to assemble to get their meals. Shortly thereafter, a noncitizen adult female called out to BPAs. Two BPAs entered the cell and checked on the woman. At 3:59 p.m., a BPA stepped out of the cell and called out for assistance. Approximately 20 seconds later, the CBP-contracted EMT ran into the cell.

Interviews of BPAs and the contracted EMT who initially treated the woman indicated she was found on a mat on the cell floor covered with a mylar blanket and that her skin appeared to be discolored and cold to the touch. BPAs and the CBP-contracted EMT immediately checked her vital signs, requested emergency medical services, initiated CPR, and applied an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). The AED did not advise to deliver a shock for the duration of the CPR, though it did continue to issue auditory prompts and perform checks for cardiac activity for the duration of the resuscitation efforts.

CBP personnel continued CPR with the assistance of the AED until the arrival of a South Texas Emergency Care (STEC) ambulance to HRL at 4:12 p.m. STEC personnel assumed responsibility for the woman's care and departed HRL for Valley Baptist Medical Center (VBMC), Harlingen, TX, at approximately 4:31 p.m. The woman was officially declared deceased by a physician at the VBMC emergency room at 4:50 p.m.

CBP OPR interviewed other noncitizens who were in the cell with the woman and her children. None indicated they were aware that she was in medical distress or that she had expressed or exhibited signs of any medical conditions. They became aware of the fact she was nonresponsive when the BPAs approached the door to their cell to provide meals and observed that one of her children was crying. Upon witnessing her condition, they immediately notified the BPAs at the door.

The Cameron County Medical Examiner's Office conducted an autopsy on the woman on August 30, 2023. The results will be released by that office when available.

This incident remains under review by CBP OPR. The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General was also notified

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**Tags:** [Accountability and Transparency](#)

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