

THE WATCHDOGS CHICAGO POLITICS

Feds deployed tear gas on the Far Southeast Side even after cops told them they had no gas masks, sources say

The agents deployed gas, smoke and other riot-control chemicals against residents and officers, including Chicago Police Department Deputy Chief Dan O'Connor, who had asked them not to use the gas, law enforcement sources say.

By Peter Nickeas | Illinois Answers Project and Tom Schuba | Nov 13, 2025, 6:30am EST



A federal immigration agent throws a tear-gas canister at protesters on Oct. 14 at 105th Street and Avenue N in the East Side neighborhood on Chicago's Far Southeast Side. A Chicago police supervisor who did not have a gas mask washes the irritant from his eyes. | Anthony Vazquez / Sun-Times



Federal agents deployed tear gas on the Far Southeast Side — sickening protesters and more than a dozen cops — despite a deputy Chicago police chief having told them his officers didn't have gas masks and offering to clear a path so the agents could safely leave a chaotic scene, according to law enforcement sources.

Angry residents had poured into the street to confront federal immigration agents near 105th Street and Avenue N in the East Side neighborhood Oct. 14 after agents had rammed a car while trying to make an arrest.

Just after police officers arrived to take over and secure the area, the federal agents deployed tear gas, smoke and other riot-control chemicals against residents and officers, including Chicago Police Department Deputy Chief Dan O'Connor, who had asked the feds not to use the gas, the sources said.

In addition to O'Connor, the South Chicago police district's second-in-command, shift commander and much of the district's tactical team were sickened by the gas, according to police sources.

O'Connor declined to comment. The police department and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security did not respond to requests for comment.

Video taken by a TV news helicopter shows Chicago police supervisors in white shirts talking with the federal agents, then forming a line between them and the crowd. The video shows an agent rolling a can of gas from behind police officers just as someone in the crowd tosses an object toward a truck. Within seconds, tear gas blankets the intersection.

Feds deployed tear gas on the Far South Side even after cops told them...



An hour later, the department's first deputy superintendent issued an order requiring officers to have their department helmets and gas masks, "if issued, immediately accessible while on duty."

Over the last two months, Chicago residents frequently have protested when immigration agents came to their neighborhoods and took people away. The agents often wear masks and have little or no identification on their green or camouflage overalls and travel in covert rental trucks or SUVs, with temporary light bars.

In two instances, including the one in the East Side neighborhood, police officials had offered to clear or already had cleared a path for the federal agents, whose presence had drawn crowds of protesters, but the agents still fired enough chemical munitions to cover portions of city blocks with smoke and tear gas.

In [Brighton Park](#) 10 days earlier, federal agents had deployed gas at people who lined Kedzie Avenue at Pershing Road and 39th Place and 40th Street to protest after [agents shot a woman](#) there. Demonstrators whistled and swore at the agents. Some tossed plastic and glass bottles.

Police officers cleared a path at the south end of the scene so the agents could depart quickly and unobstructed. Instead, they went north, though there was a

crowd there, and fired pepper balls and launched tear-gas canisters before leaving. More than two dozen officers were exposed to gas that afternoon.

A federal agent in an armored personnel carrier aims an air-powered gun used to fire pepper balls and rubber bullets toward protesters Oct. 4 in Brighton Park after protesters learned that U.S. Border Patrol agents had shot and wounded a woman, Marimar Martinez, in the Southwest Side neighborhood. | Anthony Vazquez / Sun-Times

People have used [whistles](#), group chats and social media to alert neighbors when immigration agents have been spotted.

In the Brighton Park and East Side incidents, federal agents were involved in vehicle crashes with people they wanted to arrest, so agents had to wait for tow trucks and for police to finish crash reports.

The agents' use of force is the subject of a lawsuit against U.S. Customs and Border Protection. A federal judge has said the way feds have used gas "[shocks the conscience](#)." U.S. District Judge Sara Ellis has ordered federal agents not to use "riot-control weapons" against protesters or observers who pose no immediate threat and, even then, not without first giving two warnings. She also has restricted their use of neckholds that might restrict blood or air flow.

The judge said U.S. Border Patrol Cmdr. Gregory Bovino “[admitted that he lied about whether a rock hit him before he deployed tear gas in Little Village](#)” a week before [Halloween](#). Ellis said that “the unlawful activity by a few protesters does not transform a peaceful assembly into an unlawful assembly.”

The lawsuit was filed by protesters and journalists two days after the gas deployment in Brighton Park and cited the way agents treated people there.

In that case, radio traffic shows that Chicago Police Department Chief of Patrol [Jon Hein](#) ordered officers not to respond when a crowd started surrounding agents, which prompted confusion as officers began responding to the scene.

The order incensed some officers. Dozens of complaints were filed with the city. Chicago Police Supt. Larry Snelling, speaking at a news conference the day the lawsuit was filed, said it was “absolutely not true” that officers were told to stand down.

But the police department is refusing to release police video recordings from the Brighton Park incident, including footage from a department drone, [citing an investigation into the patrol chief’s actions that day](#). The police department also hasn’t released an after-action report regarding what happened.

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