

# **STREET GANGS:**

## **Intelligence & Awareness Training**

Provided by the



**GANG UNIT**



## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit is a statewide specialty unit that investigates violent criminal street gangs and their related crimes. There are approximately 40 Troopers assigned to 7 teams, all of which work closely with our local and federal law enforcement partners. The Gang Unit's focus is on intelligence gathering, gang/crime suppression, and case management of gang related crimes. The Gang Unit assists municipalities by providing gang training, completing joint directed patrols in high crime areas, and providing undercover officers for narcotics purchases in gang and high crime areas.

## **WHAT IS A GANG?**

MGL c.265 s.44 references a gang as an "organization of three or more persons which has a common name, identifying sign or symbol and whose members individually or collectively engage in criminal activity." Most gangs have a hierarchy of leadership & membership, and at least some form of organizational structure.

## **WHO ARE GANG MEMBERS?**

Today, there is no "typical" gang member. Gang members come in all shapes, sizes, nationalities, races, religions, economic backgrounds, and age: male *and* female. The stereotype of the young inner-city minority male dressed in baggie clothes and bandanas, gang beads draped around their necks, tossing hand signs, is no longer the rule. Pop culture has mainstreamed the "gangsta" look.

## **RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH JOINING A GANG:**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| * Friends who are gang members                | * Constitutional/biological factors |
| * Family issues (subs. abuse, violence, etc.) | * Bullying                          |
| * Positive media portrayals of gangs          | * Academic failure/problems         |
| * Environment                                 | * Economic deprivation              |

## **WHY DO PEOPLE JOIN GANGS?**

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| * Sense of family or belonging | * Status and/or recognition                |
| * Protection                   | * Money/economic hardship                  |
| * Excitement                   | * Environment/lack of positive role models |
| * Lack of self-esteem          | * It may be all they know...               |

## **RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS:** (oft-heard quotes from interviews w/ gang members)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * "We're like a family"                    | * "We will protect you"                  |
| * "You'll get girls, money, parties, etc." | * "We will love you"                     |
| * "We will take care of you"               | * "You'll get discipline & structure"    |
| * "You'll get respect"                     | * "Join or else" (pressure/intimidation) |

## **WHERE DOES RECRUITMENT TAKE PLACE?**

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Schools             | * Neighborhoods                      |
| * Parks & playgrounds | * Internet (facebook, youtube, etc.) |
| * Malls               | * Correctional facilities            |
| * Recreation centers  | * Anywhere kids hang out             |



## HOW DO YOU GET INTO A GANG?

- \* Born in (legacy)
- \* Voted in (by membership)
- \* Crimed in (to prove worth)
- \* Blessed in (by leadership)
- \* Jumped in (assaulted)
- \* Sexed in

## GANG IDENTIFIERS:

*Many gangs are moving toward reduced visibility!!!*

- **TATTOOS** are more prevalent than ever. Gang members will tattoo gang symbol, or initials of gang. (i.e. Latin Kings will have 5 pointed crown or "LK" or "ALKQN")
- **TAGGING** (gang name, symbols, or initials)
- **CLOTHING:** sportswear vs. beads. Most gangs no longer wear beads; they wear "team" clothing (i.e. Latin Kings may wear Bruins gear). *Note:* Wearing sportswear in & of itself is obviously insufficient. Groups of individuals wearing the same colors warrants further invest, however, as does an individual who consistently wears the same color(s). Many gangs, such as the Latin Kings and OMG's, have their own clothing lines. Other gangs use a more subtle approach: i.e., Gangsta Disciples wear clothes with tridents on them, or don't put their right arm through the sleeve (they leave the sleeve hanging). This has replaced the "one pant leg rolled up" look.
- **HAND SIGNS** (less prevalent on streets – "draws too much attention from law enforcement")
- **MISCELLANEOUS** (i.e. "doodles" on/in notebooks are extremely common, as is gang indicia on cell phone wall paper. Gang names, initials, symbols, guns, marijuana leaves, etc.)
- Although perhaps not worn overtly, most gang members will have some form of indicia on them at any given time (necklace, ring, belt buckle, etc. which represents the gang)

## STREET NAMES/STREET SLANG:

The use of street names is extremely common. Gang members are very likely to be known to others by their street names and not their birth names. For the police, the connection between the street name to the birth name is a valuable piece of intelligence. Also, most hardcore gang members have grown accustomed to being in the presence of police officers and will sometimes use elaborate street slang to communicate with others without exposing the true meaning of their conversation.

## COMMUNICATION:

Gang members use a variety of means to communicate, such as:

- \* Hands signs
- \* Clothing
- \* The internet
- \* Graffiti
- \* Subtle body language
- \* Written correspondence ("Kites")

Communication methods & meanings change extremely quickly in the gang culture, as members race to keep "fresh", current, and ahead of law enforcement & mainstream America. Written correspondence, particularly to and from correctional facilities, often contain hidden messages. Numbers often represent letters (1=A, 2=B, etc., i.e. **1 2** = **Asian Boyz**, and **81** = **Hells Angels**) or they may off-set the numbers (i.e. the Latin Kings have used 1=K, 2=L, etc.). Also, they may create an endless array of codes: i.e. the letters capitalized, read backwards, may create a message:

hey johN, what's Up? it's goinG good here. LoL. u seEn Sam lately? = SELL GUN.





### **COMMON GANG ACTIVITY:**

- \* Narcotics distribution
- \* Violent crimes (beat downs, feuds)
- \* Prostitution
- \* Gaming
- \* Reduction of quality of life (loitering, intimidation, etc.)
- \* Firearms possession
- \* Witness intimidation
- \* Property crimes (B&E's, tagging, shoplifting)
- \* Extortion

### **GRAFFITI / TAGGING:**

Careful interpretation of gang graffiti, or tagging, can provide a great deal of insight into what is going on within a particular group or between gangs. Tagging can often be found in public areas, on personal belongings and on gang houses. *It is important to recognize that all tagging is not gang related!*

### **WHY DO GANG MEMBERS TAG?**

- \* To mark territory
- \* As a tribute, or warning to other gangs
- \* Memorials
- \* To raise awareness of the gang's existence
- \* As a declaration of membership
- \* As a form of communication
- \* To send messages to other gangs

### **WHAT CAN LAW ENFORCEMENT LEARN FROM TAGGING?**

- \* The existence of a gang in a new or specific area
- \* Turf boundaries
- \* Memberships and hierarchy ("roll call" boards, new members, etc.)
- \* Gang conflicts
- \* Significant events, dates, etc.

### **WEAPONS:**

Gang members tend to be fascinated with weapons, particularly handguns. The weapons command status both within the gang and among other gangs. A gang member possessing weapons and the willingness to use them can often rise quickly w/in the gang.

### **GANG TRENDS:**

- \* Increasingly violent (increased access to firearms)
- \* Increasingly tactical (many gang members now have military urban combat experience)
- \* Increasingly mobile
- \* Generational (many gangs in Mass now encompass two and three generations)
- \* Migrating to suburbs
- \* Female involvement rising
- \* Decreasingly hierarchal: "Hybrid gangs"

*"Hybrid gangs" epitomize the fluid nature of gangs, and often are more ethnically & racially diverse, have no charters or rules of conduct, allow association with more than one gang, & often change names. "Hybrid gangs" are often more difficult to monitor than "conventional" gangs because of the ever-changing make-up of the gang.*



## **COMBATTING GANG-RELATED CRIME:**

### **PREVENTION, INTERVENTION & SUPPRESSION**

- \* **Prevention** programs must start early (elementary school) to be effective.
- \* **Intervention** programs must be community-based & involve LE *and* civilian partners
- \* **Suppression** must be done through *proactive* enforcement:
- \* Selective enforcement of *impact players* in *high crime areas*
- \* Target-specific ops are best: variations of the “High Point” model are effective
- \* Disrupt criminal activity in area “hot spots”
- \* Prevent crime by investigating suspicious activity
- \* Conduct MV stops for traffic offenses
- \* Make arrests for criminal violations
- \* Cultivate informants to further investigations and provide intelligence
- \* Narcotics invests (search warrants often reveal the best intelligence). Low level “street sweeps” are good for publicity, boosting public confidence, and cooling a hot area, but are ineffective at putting any significant dent in the drug problem in the community
- \* Criminal investigations – covert & overt (beat-downs, terminations, assaults)
- \* Inter-agency cooperation: strong partnerships between state, local & federal LE agencies has greatly increased our respective successes

### **HOW DO YOU GET OUT OF A GANG?:**

- \* Voluntary release possible from some gangs
- \* Buy your way out (monetary release)
- \* Move from area
- \* Forced out, but with no assault
- \* Jumped out (assaulted)
- \* “Terminated” (killed)

### **DANGERS FOR GANG MEMBERS LEAVING A GANG:**

- \* Feelings of loneliness, sense of loss, etc.
- \* Nothing to occupy their time
- \* They must remain “hyper-vigilant” due to threats from former members & rival members who do not know they are out
- \* Maintenance of law enforcement scrutiny

### **HOW TO HELP KIDS LEAVE A GANG:**

- \* Provide alternative activities (sports/recreation programs, etc.)
- \* Help them seek employment
- \* Assist them in obtaining counseling
- \* Work with family
- \* Provide a positive role model
- \* Consider relocation
- \* Seek the assistance of the community to keep them busy (clergy, etc.)
- \* Provide short & long term goals (obtain GED, confirmation, etc.)





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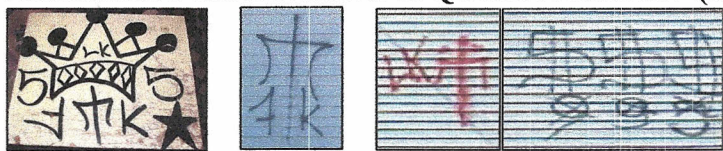


### Quick-reference field guide: Colors and symbols of national gangs in Massachusetts

**PEOPLE vs. FOLK:** People and Folk are NOT gangs, they are “Nations” or alliances under which gangs are formed. Gangs that are allied under the PEOPLE set tend to wear red or black & gold, “dress to the right”, and include the following symbols: 5 pointed star, upright crown, playboy bunny with straight ears, pitch fork pointed down. The FOLK set tend to wear blue & black, “dress to the left”, and include the following symbols: 6 pointed star, upside down crown, playboy bunny with bent ears, pitch fork pointed up.

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#### **ALMIGHTY LATIN KING & QUEEN NATION (ALKQN) (aka Latin Kings)**



**Colors:** Black & Gold

**Origin:** National gang from Chicago (1940's) (*People* set)

**Rivals:** Folk (Gangsta Disciples: LGD, BGD, etc)

**Membership:** Hispanic, Caucasian of Mediterranean descent (Italian, Greek, etc.) The subset PLF is an elevated security threat.

**Symbols:** *5 pointed crown* (represents Respect, Honesty, Unity, Knowledge, Love), *360* (represents the “circle of love”).

Meetings are held with participants standing in a circle, holding hands w/ feet touching), *beads* (5 black, 5 gold, etc). Usually only worn during meetings, *555*, *\$\$\$*, *ALKQN*, *LK*, *ADR* (Amor de Rey), *FK* (Folk Killer), *999* (represents “666” upside down, meant to disrespect Folks/Gangsta Disciples), *Trident facing down* (meant to disrespect Folks/Gangsta Disciples)

**Slogans:** Amor de Rey (ADR): Love of King, FK (Folk Killers), “5 alive, 6 must die”, “5 poppin, 6 droppin”

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#### **ASIAN BOYZ (ABZ)**



**Colors:** Blue

**Origin:** National gang from California

**Rivals:** People, some TRG sets

**Membership:** Primarily Asian (Cambodian), although there are some Caucasian & Hispanic members & associates

**Symbols:** 12, ABZ, AB

**Activity:** extortion, home invasion, assaults, homicide, narcotics distribution, weapons offenses, etc.

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#### **BLOODS**



**Colors:** Red

**Origin:** National gang from California, “Piru” (People)

**Rivals:** Crips

**Membership:** Anyone - includes subsets such as Blood Red Dragons (BRD), Donald G's, SexMoneyMurder (SMM), etc.

**Symbols:** Will cross out letter “C” when writing to show disrespect for Crips

**Slogans:** B4L (Blood for Life), CK (Crip Killers), refer to Crips as “Crabs”

**Misc:** Alternate colors: Green making \$, Brown @ war, Red @ function, Black is universal

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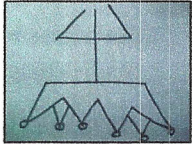
## CRIPS



**Colors:** Blue  
**Origin:** National gang from California (Folk)  
**Rivals:** Bloods  
**Membership:** Anyone (includes subsets such as AC, OT)  
**Symbols:** Will cross out letter "B" when writing to show disrespect for Bloods, may wear British Knight (BK) sneakers  
**Slogans:** "Cuzz", BK (Blood Killers), refer to Bloods as "Slobs" (SK)

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## GANGSTA DISCIPLES (LGD & BGD)



**Colors:** Blue & black  
**Origin:** National gang (Folk)  
**Rivals:** People (ALKQN, etc.)  
**Membership:** Usually Black or Hispanic  
**Symbols:** *Trident* (three pronged pitchfork, facing up), *6 pointed star* (star of David), *Devil's tail*, *Grim reaper*, *BGD* (Black Gangsta Disciples), *LGD* (Latin Gangsta Disciples), *KK* (King Killers)

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## JUGGALO



**Colors:** Red & black  
**Origin:** Followers of the horror-rap group Insane Clown Posse (ICP) from Detroit  
**Membership:** Anyone; females are "Juggalettes"  
**Symbols:** running "Hatchet man", hatchets, clown faces  
**Slogans:** "Twiztid Killa", "Down with the clown till I'm dead in the ground", etc.  
**Misc:** The "Dark Carnival" belief system; violent, graphic & gruesome imagery  
**\*Important\*:** *Most "Juggalo's" are NOT gang-related, they are simply part of the ICP experience. However, there ARE sects of the Juggalo's that DO commit crimes for and as part of an organized gang, hence their inclusion here.*

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## LA FAMILIA



**Colors:** Red & white (Worcester & Springfield); Red, white & blue elsewhere  
**Origin:** National gang from New York (People)  
**Rivals:** Los Solidos  
**Membership:** Mostly Hispanic  
**Symbols:** Red heart w/ a crest of thorns around it, "12-6" (LF), tear drops  
**Slogans:** Amor de Familia (ADF), Amor de La Familia (ADLF)

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## LOS SOLIDOS



**Colors:** Red & blue  
**Origin:** National gang (Folk)  
**Rivals:** ALKQN, La Familia  
**Membership:** Mostly Hispanic  
**Symbols:** Happy/sad faces ("Theater faces")  
**Slogans:** The Solid Ones (TSO), Los Solidos Nation (LSN)

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## MS-13 (Mara Salvatrucha) (El Salvadorian)



**Colors:** Blue & white  
**Origin:** National gang from El Salvador (13th St in LA)  
**Rivals:** 18th Street  
**Membership:** El Salvadorian  
**Symbols:** *MS, MS-13, X-13* (orig MS were from 13<sup>th</sup> St in LA); "*18<sup>th</sup> St*" ***crossed out*** (rivals from 18<sup>th</sup> St in LA), Devil's horns  
**Slogans:** Salvadoran Pride, Mara, "EBLS" (East Boston Loco Salvadorans)

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## NETA (Never Ever Tolerate Abuse)



**Colors:** Red (blood), White (peace), Black (mourn lives lost for NETA) \*Blue\*  
**Origin:** Prison rights gang formed in PR in 1970 by Carlos Illiarte (La Sombra, the Shadow). Illiarte was killed in prison by the "27", March 30, 1981  
**Rivals:** 27, Los Solidos  
**Membership:** Hispanic  
**Symbols:** *Neta de corazon* (of the heart), *1.50* (150% committed), *handcuffs* (oppression), *Virgin Mary*, *Perdoname madre mia* (Forgive me Mother), Puerto Rican flag, beaded necklace: 78 white beads (78 towns in PR), 7 black beads (1st 7 jails in PR to hold NETA chapters), 1 red bead (blood shed by Illiarte), 1 white bead (peace), with a cross at the end  
**Slogans:** (Amor) De Corazon (of the heart)

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## TINY RASKAL GANG (TRG)



**Colors:** 2 "sets"; Grey rag & Blue rag  
**Origin:** National gang from California  
**Rivals:** Fluid; ABZ  
**Membership:** Primarily Cambodian, some Caucasian & Hispanic  
**Symbols:** TRG, TRGrey  
**Intel:** Highly organized, very violent : extortion, home invasions, assaults, robberies, drug trafficking, weapons offenses

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## VICE LORDS



**Colors:** Black & red; some factions use black & gold  
**Origin:** Chicago (area)  
**Rivals:** Folk  
**Membership:** Primarily African-American  
**Symbols:** top hat, cane, gloves, crescent moon, rabbit head, 22-12 (VL), inverted crossed pitchforks, 312 (area code for Chicago)  
**Intel:** Propensity for violence, assaults, weapons offenses, street-level narcotics dealing

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## 18<sup>th</sup> STREET



**Origin:** 18<sup>th</sup> street in LA  
**Rivals:** MS-13  
**Symbols:** 18, XV3, XVIII, 666  
**Intel:** Less than 100 members in Massachusetts, in loosely associated “cliques”  
No known national leader or charter, 18th Street is well known for drug trafficking, with established ties to drug cartels  
Well known for their violent altercations with MS-13

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## LOCAL STREET GANGS: (H Block, HomicideHoodNiggas “HHN”, etc.)

Local street gangs in Massachusetts are usually small, neighborhood gangs often named after a street or housing project. These gangs are usually loosely organized, less hierarchal and turf-based. Members often claim to be Bloods, Crips, etc, but have no connection to the national gangs, or true understanding or mastery of the gang’s charters, hierarchy, etc.

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## MISCELLANEOUS SECURITY THREAT GROUPS (STG’s):

**ANARCHISTS** such as the Black Bloc, Black Tea Society, Ruckus Society, etc. often engage in crimes of social disruption, corporate vandalism, theft, assaults (civilian and law enforcement), property crimes, etc.



**WHITE SUPREMICIST/HATE GROUPS** such as the Aryan Nation/Brotherhood, Hooligans, Creativity Movement (formerly the World Church of the Creator), Peckerwood family etc. often engage in civil rights violations, assaults (civilian and law enforcement), weapons & narcotic offenses, property crimes, etc.



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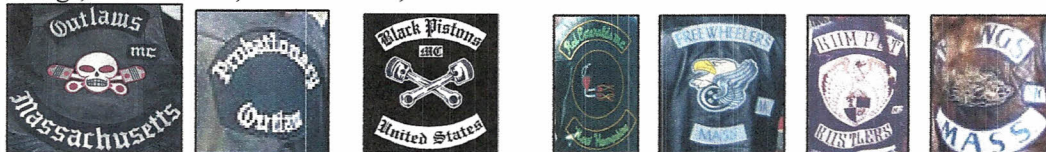
## OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANGS (OMG's):

There are two main OMG's in Massachusetts: The **Hells Angels** (HAMC) aka the "Red & White", and the **Outlaws** aka the "Black & White". The two clubs are fierce rivals, and often engage in assaults against rival club members, as well as extortion, intimidation, vehicle theft, narcotics & weapons offenses, etc.

**HELLS ANGELS** have the following chapters: Berkshire (Lee), Boston (Nomads), Lowell, Salem (Lynn), Worcester & the "Big House Crew" (incarcerated members). Associated clubs of the Hells Angels include: the Red Devils, Vietnam Vets, Domineers, Vigilantes, Longriders, Sidewinders, Old Buzzards, Distant Thunder, etc. as well as the Legion of Doom, a riding club comprised of members, many of whom are Hispanic, on Japanese sports bikes.



**OUTLAWS** have chapters in East Boston, Brockton, Taunton and incarcerated ("the Lounge Lizards"). The Taunton chapter was temporarily dissolved after Operation Road Kill in 2006/2007. Associated clubs include: the Black Pistons, Deacons, Devils Desciples, Hawgs, Freewheelers, Red Emeralds, etc.



In addition to the 3 piece back patch on the 1% OMG "colors" (vest), members may also have any number of "flash" (patches, pins, etc.) on the front and/or sides. Some of these include:

The 1% diamond, indicating they are an OMG:



Club logos, symbols:



AFFA, OFFO, DFFD, etc. "Angels Forever, Forever Angels", etc.



Miscellaneous:

