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**Police in O.C. Arrest Latino Laborers;
Eight are taken from a Home Depot store to an immigration checkpoint by
officers in Orange, who say the men broke work solicitation laws.**

Jennifer Delson, Times Staff Writer

**Eight Latino laborers without proof of legal U.S. residency were arrested
Friday morning in front of the Home Depot in Orange and taken to an
immigration checkpoint, from which they could be deported.**

**Orange police said the men were soliciting work outside the store and
were cited for violating a city law that prohibits it.**

**A police spokesman said the arrests were made at the request of Home
Depot and its customers. Company spokeswoman Kathryn Gallagher said
store officials did not call police and were unaware that arrests were to
happen.**

**The arrests drew applause from opponents of illegal immigration and
raised concerns among immigrant advocates.**

**Both groups, however, agreed that the arrests were uncommon, despite
the large number of day laborers who solicit work at Home Depot stores
and elsewhere throughout Southern California.**

**"It is unusual, but I think it's wonderful. These people are criminals in
violation of federal immigration law," said Barbara Coe of Huntington
Beach, chairwoman of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform.**

**The arrests alarmed immigrant activists, including Nativio Lopez of Santa
Ana, national president of the immigrant advocacy organization
Hermandad Mexicana, who wants to work to overturn the local law.**

**Lopez said he believed that police violated the workers' due-process
rights because the workers did not have a chance to challenge what could
have been an improper arrest.**

**Cities with similar laws have faced legal challenges. In May, a federal
judge struck down a Glendale law that barred day laborers from soliciting
work at curbsides, arguing that the law violated the workers' free speech
rights.**

Orange Councilman Steven F. Ambriz said he was unaware that police were targeting the workers, and said he would request a report from the Police Department.

Eight of nine men arrested did not have proper identification and were taken to a Border Patrol checkpoint in Dana Point, said Orange Police Sgt. Fred Lopez.

Another man who did have identification was cited and released.

The citation carries a fine that must be determined in Orange County Superior Court, said the sergeant.

"These are not immigration sweeps," said Fred Lopez. "We are arresting people who are violating our laws." He said the solicitors had violated city code, and police chose to enforce the law Friday because workers were soliciting work on property where signs in English and Spanish prohibiting it have long been posted.

The Home Depot is in an area of the city in which the code prohibits soliciting work during certain hours on public or private property from a person in a vehicle.

Leo Donati, 31, of Orange was arrested and released because he had an identification card, he said later. He said that about 7:30 a.m. Friday, a motorist in a van asked him and others if they were looking for work. When they approached, police arrived in a second van.

"There are people out there all the time," he said.

"Nothing like this has ever happened."