



Federal Government Targets Employers: Increasing I-9 Audits

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The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) bureau of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced, on July 1, 2009, an initiative to step up audits of employers' Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and related employment records. The ICE Notice alerts employers that ICE will be inspecting their hiring records to ensure compliance with employment eligibility verification laws and regulations. ICE is responsible for enforcing the nation's immigration and customs laws.

Employers are required to complete and retain a Form I-9 for each individual they hire for employment in the United States. This form requires employers to review and record the individual's identity documents and determine whether the documents reasonably appear to be genuine and related to the individual.

To drive home its message and redirection to tougher immigration policing, ICE announced that it would be serving 652 businesses throughout the United States with Notices of Inspection (NOIs) of their I-9s and related employment records. ICE stated that the businesses to be served were selected for inspection as a result of leads and information obtained through other investigative means. On July 7, 2009, Krispy Kreme Doughnut Corporation paid a \$40,000.00 fine to the federal government in settlement of I-9 violations investigated by ICE officials.

Employers can protect their companies from violations and excessive fines by maintaining accurate and updated I-9 records of employees. Employers should also consult and comply with ICE's "best hiring" practices to ensure complete compliance.

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