



I-9 COMPLIANCE A Fixed Fee Program

Benesch offers a thorough Form I-9 compliance service at a very competitive, fixed-fee rate. Our Labor & Employment attorneys can take the burden of internal I-9 compliance off your plate while ensuring that your company can demonstrate a good faith effort to comply with legal requirements. All communication in Benesch's I-9 compliance program is protected by attorney/client privilege, allowing you to receive candid advice on your risks, liabilities and steps to eliminate them.

Investigations and audits of Form I-9 documents by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are steeply on the rise, and the Obama administration is promising to keep the heat on employers in the coming year.

In April 2014, ICE announced that it had fined 14 Massachusetts companies a total of \$175,000 last year following audits of their Forms I-9, which requires employers to verify each newly hired employee's identity and employment authorization documents, such as a United States passport, Social Security card, driver's license or employment authorization card. That is just a small measure of ICE's overall enforcement efforts. A recent report by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security found that ICE had fined employers from across the country a total of \$31.2 million for Form I-9 violations between 2009 and 2012.

But the fines tell only part of the story: ICE has also criminally charged employers for violations. In 2012, it arrested more than 240 business owners, managers, supervisors or human resources employees for their part in schemes to avoid Form I-9 requirements.

Unfortunately, most employers are unaware that they have a problem with Form I-9 employment eligibility verification requirements until they are audited by governmental authorities. By that time, it can be too late to undo any damage.

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Pat Peters at ppeters@beneschlaw.com or (216) 363-4434, or Rick Hepp at rhepp@beneschlaw.com or (216) 363-4457.