

## I-9 INSPECTIONS LIKELY FOR LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYER

On March 2, 2010, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") agency announced that it is issuing notices of inspection to review the hiring records of 180 businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The notices alert business owners that ICE will inspect their I-9 forms and other hiring records to determine whether the employer is in compliance with employment eligibility verification laws and regulations.

In 2009, ICE implemented a new worksite enforcement strategy to focus on auditing and investigating employers that are suspected of cultivating illegal workplaces by knowingly employing illegal workers. The 180 notices of inspection are a result of the new strategy. The special agent in charge of the New Orleans ICE investigations unit said in a March 2, 2010 statement that ICE is committed to establishing a meaningful I-9 inspection program to promote compliance with the law.

Employers should be mindful that raids by immigration officials and criminal prosecution can ensue if the government discerns or finds I-9 violations. Accordingly, we urge all employers to consider a review of their records, as well as their existing I-9 recordkeeping procedures, to ensure their I-9 documents are in keeping with ICE's regulations. We are more than happy to assist with I-9 audit completion.

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