



ICE Raids Round Up Undocumented Workers and Disrupt Businesses

Client Advisories

08.13.2019

It was hard to miss the media coverage of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") raids which took place at multiple food processing plants in Mississippi last week. The Associated Press reported that initially 680 undocumented workers were initially arrested, although a day later more than 300 had been released, which raises questions regarding whether they were truly undocumented, or simply that poor record keeping led to some verification confusion. Either number is staggeringly high and, while it is unlikely each enforcement action will be as visible as what we saw last week, employers facing review can encounter business disruption and significant fines.

Enforcement efforts and unannounced raids are a stated priority of the current administration, just as they were in the previous administration. In businesses large and small, management and owners must protect themselves from the civil fines and even criminal penalties that can arise from employing undocumented workers, or from having poor employment verification or I-9 policies. In businesses large or small, we are all subject to the exact same employment verification and I-9 regulations. HR professionals and owners are often unaware or improperly trained on these regulations, which typically result in ICE fines of \$110 to \$16,000 PER VIOLATION. ICE conducts not only raids, but audits by subpoena power and they are doing so right now in our region, including New Jersey. Statistics show that employers commonly have 40% of their I-9 forms prepared incorrectly, unaddressed upon expiration, or not prepared at all.

You can protect your company by learning proper hiring and screening procedures, I-9 verification policies and document retention. If you have questions about how we can help or train your business, please contact [Gregory J. Palakow](#) at 609-580-3700 or [Peter L. Frattarelli](#) at 856-795-2121.