

USCIS Launches New I-9 Forms

On November 23rd, 2007, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a new version of the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9). In the attached press release (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/pressrelease/FormI9Reminder112307.pdf>), they stress that all employers are required to complete a Form I-9 for each employee hired in the United States and that employers must begin using the revised form no later than Dec. 26, 2007.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) makes all U.S. employers responsible for verifying the identity and work authorization of all individuals, whether U.S. citizens or not, hired after November 6, 1986 and requires employers to complete an I-9 for each employee. This mandate is not triggered until a person has been hired, whereupon the new employee is obligated to submit a document or combination of documents from the approved list to verify his identity and work eligibility. The new I-9 form includes changes to the list of approved documents.

The new form also makes providing the employee's Social Security Number voluntary unless the employer participates in the USCIS Electronic Employment Eligibility Verification Program (E-Verify.) The E-Verify Program allows employers to access databases administered by the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to check the information on an I-9 form to officially determine if the individual is eligible for employment in the U.S. Although federal law currently makes the program voluntary, many employers find there are advantages to having direct access to the government's data at the time of hire. Strategic Information Resources has been approved by the Department of Homeland Security to perform verifications through the E-Verify Program on behalf of employers.

Links to the new I-9 form and a 47-page handbook on I-9 compliance can be found at www.backgrounddecision.com <<http://www.backgrounddecision.com>>