

# I-9 Audit Increases & Government Fines

Preparation and forward thinking can save you pain and money down the road.



It used to be that employers never really had to worry about getting audited by the government for their small or large business because the chances of them knocking on your door were slim to none.

However, today in the year 2015 things have changed quite a bit to say the least. Since the year 2009 when the "bold new audit initiative" was set in place and launched by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the amounts of audits have increased to over 12 times as much.

## Possible Fine Amounts

With the government now cracking down on audits and making sure companies are properly keeping track of documents of their employees and themselves, it is important to be fully aware of the risks you are taking when not doing them correctly.

If you are audited and they find that there are mistakes in your I-9 forms you will be charged anywhere from \$110 - \$1,100 per I-9 form even if there are no undocumented employees of yours that were discovered. The fines charged depend on what errors you have made and the severity of each one.

However, if the case is that they do find out that you knowingly hired or are continuing to employ any undocumented individuals within your workplace, the fines range anywhere from \$375 - \$16,000 per worker.



**\$110 - \$1,100 per error**



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Not only will you be charged some rather harsh fines by the government but as either a company owner, manager or human resource professional you are now facing the possibility of being held criminally liable for specific infractions.

## Recent Hefty Government Fines

In mid-September of 2014, a resort based in Salt Lake City, Utah was audited and ended up having to pay approximately \$2,000,000 just for hiring unauthorized workers. Because the company was compliant when being audited and taking immediate action to correct their hiring process, they were able to completely avoid any criminal prosecution.

It came out recently that back in September of 2010 the same company was audited and issued a warning because of the findings of 133 employees that were unauthorized to work there.



A much more recent I-9 government fine was issued at a Minnesota-based staffing firm. Because of findings of false attestations on several I-9 forms they were fined a total of \$227,000.



A similar audit investigation was done for a company that had recently undergone an audit a few years back and then again was audited and charged \$329,895. This is a prime example that although companies may feel that because they were audited in the past they should now be safe from any future audits is completely not the case.

## Step 1

Now, after knowing that the possibilities of being audited are much higher than you probably were expecting, you are probably wondering how you can avoid any possible fees that may occur if and when you are audited in the future.

First, you need to set up and establish a procedure for handling any and all government documents that you distribute to your employees. Make certain that ALL of your incoming and current employees have all the proper documents and fill each and every one of them out correctly. Because these certain documents can be rather confusing for employees to understand if they have little experience with them, become knowledgeable enough of I-9 forms to be able to answer any possible questions that may arise while they are filling them out.

How to  
\$ Avoid \$  
Government  
Fines

## Step 2

Next, you need to make sure that you have a system in place for any occurrence if and when you are being audited in the future. Have the number and contact information ready and available for an experienced immigration counsel that will help you with the process. You want to be certain that you have all documents in place and that you can prove during the audit that all of your employees and yourself have the appropriate documents filled out and are in fact legal to work within your certain workplace.

Being audited and having to pay a hefty fee may mean the end of certain companies and small businesses that simply cannot afford such a high expense. Be as prepared as possible and always make sure you are following the rules set out by the government.

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If you think you may have an i9 compliance problem but are hesitant to take a closer look, let PointHR help.

We'll perform a confidential audit of a representative sample of your completed i9 forms—free of charge and with absolutely no commitment required. You'll see where you stand and get an in-depth look at how Total i9 Compliance Management from PointHR takes the headache out of i9 management.

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TODAY FOR FREE

Call us today at 866-661-1500 or  
email [i9@PointHR.com](mailto:i9@PointHR.com)



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