

Government Audits: Get Your House In Order

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As federal and state government agencies increase enforcement efforts through investigations and inspections, employers face increased monetary penalties and in some cases criminal sanctions. The hospitality industry is on the radar for a number of these agencies. The time to prepare is now. Focus on compliance before the Department of Labor, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Occupational Safety and Health Administration or another agency that selects your property for an audit.

Determine your vulnerability for potential wage and hour violations. The Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division has targeted the hospitality industry for compliance audits through its "Hotel and Motel Resort Pilot Initiative." The risk of high-exposure wage claims is greater than ever. Every hotel employer should review compliance common violations and, if necessary, correct them.

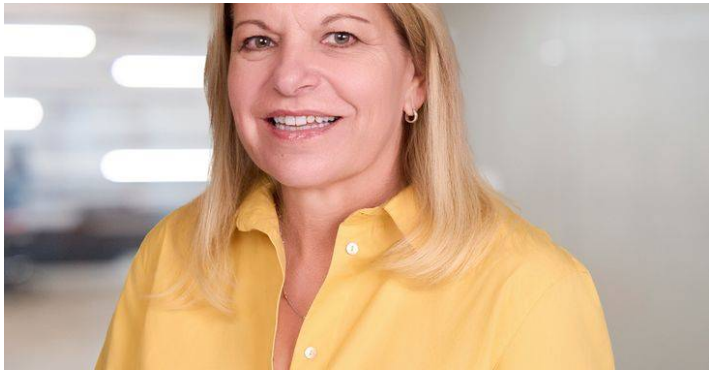
Determine your exposure for I-9 violations. The Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement set forth a strategic plan for work site enforcement and issued hundreds of Notices of Inspections in the last year. Many hospitality employers have found themselves the target of these inspections. Every employer should consider compliance steps to help protect your company and limit exposure for I-9 violations.

Compliance with the numerous state and federal laws that impact the employment process is much more complicated, and the consequences of failing to comply with those laws is becoming more severe. Implement policies and practices that both reduce the chances of future violations and enhance the ability to defend against any claims that do arise. These initiatives cannot be carried out effectively "under the gun," that is, in the midst of a government investigation. By undertaking the effort now, you can do a thorough analysis and carefully decide what steps best balance your business needs and the interests of risk reduction.

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