

Employment Law 2008 Update For Businesses & Illegal Workers

Protect your business from hefty fines or even a prison sentence by being up to date with the UK Governments January 2008 illegal worker laws.

You must always protect your business. UK employers have been warned that if they take on illegal workers they could face a prison sentence and / or massive fines.

That is the message from a new campaign launched by the Government to promote new rules which took effect this month. It is vital that companies take notice of this new legislation. The Home Office estimates it will cost more than £27m for businesses to acquaint themselves with the new law which shows how important it is for UK businesses to regard the changes.

For every illegal worker you negligently hire, you could be fined up to £10,000 or face up to two years in prison, so this really is a serious situation. It is all in a bid to crack down on illegal workers in Britain by placing more emphasis on employers to take note of who they are employing and carry out proper background checks. This in effect means businesses should become much more proactive in demonstrating that they are adhering to these new laws.

Also if an employer is found to be breaking the law they could lose the right to recruit from outside the European Union altogether. This puts pressure on recruitment agencies that specialise in foreign recruitment to make better checks on the people that they refer to local UK businesses. It also gives a strong international message that the UK's tougher new employment laws have made it more difficult to work in Britain illegally. And for residents here in Britain it shows that there is a crackdown on illegal workers – all in aid of a wider shake-up of the immigration system as a whole.

The Border and Immigration Agency undertakes regular enforcement operations against illegal working in the UK, and in 2006, they carried out over 5,200 raids, removing more than 22,000 people from the UK in only one year.

To obtain more direct information the Home Office has improved their help line that claims to offer more accurate and specific advice to businesses.

Employers who condone illegal working attract illegal migrants, which means they can pay them less money and so undercut the wages that would be paid to legitimate employees. The new Government rules are designed to protect the UK's workforce, and help employers to run a cost-effective but efficient business. There have been some concerns about racial discrimination cases against employers doing background checks, but this can easily be avoided if your company has one procedure that is followed for every potential new applicant.

Employers of migrant workers, whose right to work in the UK is not permanent, will have a new responsibility to make periodic checks on the existing workers' entitlement rather than simply checking their status only once before employment begins.

It's important that all British companies familiarise themselves with the changes, and seek professional advice if they are unsure of the procedures they should follow to make sure they don't employ illegal workers. Obtaining professional advice and revising company policies and procedures is a good way to safeguard the future of your business and assure that you are adhering to the new legislation.

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