

The dangers of employing illegal workers

Under new rules that came into effect in February 2008, the employers of illegal workers face large fines. Even unwittingly breaking the rules can result in fines of up to £10,000 per illegal worker and doing so knowingly can attract unlimited fines and a prison sentence.

According to Immigration Minister Liam Byrne, “Illegal working attracts illegal migrants and undercuts British wages. That’s why we’re determined to shut it down. The message is clear for employers – we will not tolerate illegal working.”

The new employment rules are part of a tougher regime that will see an Australian-style points-based system for managing immigration, the roll-out of a so-called ‘e-Borders programme’ (allowing people to be counted in and out of the country) and the introduction of biometric ID for all foreign nationals who are in the UK for three months or more.

The key challenge for employers will continue to be recognising whether or not a worker is illegal. For initial advice, you can call the Border and Immigration Employers Helpline on 0845 010 6677. If you have reason to suspect that one or more of your employees is an illegal worker and require legal advice before taking action, call our team for a confidential discussion. For further information, please contact Claire Bell on 0115 9 100 200 or email enquiries@actons.co.uk.



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