



Getting Ready for Business in 2017!

With the New Year upon us, it's time to get our HR ducks in a row for 2017. There are revised posters and forms that are effective in 2017 and employment law changes that merit a close watch need to be on every employer's radar.

Form I-9: Newly revised at the end of 2016, employers must begin using this newly revised [Form I-9](#) by January 22, 2017. The new form can be downloaded in a PDF version and also in a version that can be completed electronically. The U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services ([USCIS](#)) is expected to issue a new Employer Handbook to help organizations ensure the form is properly completed.

Payroll: The [IRS](#) publishes a variety of guides to help businesses properly process payroll. Specifically the series of Publication 15 documents (Publication 15, 15-A, and 15-B) provide guidance on what is considered taxable income to the employee. Additionally, Forms W-2, W-3 and W-4 can also be downloaded from the IRS website. The IRS also provides publications on a variety of other tax issues such as Health Savings Accounts and Other Tax-Favored Health Plans, Business Expenses, Instructions for each form that must be completed, and much more.

Applications, handbooks, etc.: It's recommended that all employers review their applications and handbooks at least once a year to make sure they have been updated to reflect changes in employment laws and corporate policies. Some associations, such as EAF, maintain a sample, updated handbook for their members to download and customize to suit their specific business needs.

Posters: Posters can change at any time during the year; however if your business operates in a state in which the minimum wage changes annually, make sure you've posted the appropriate poster effective January 1. The U.S. Department of Labor maintains a [website](#) linking to states with minimum wage requirements. Additionally, the appropriate state agency typically will post all required state posters on a single website for employers to access easily. The U.S. Department of Labor also maintains a website where employers can download the most current [federal employment law posters](#). A number of organizations, including [EAF](#), sell all-in-one combined posters if an employer chooses to purchase a comprehensive set of posters that is easily posted.

Training: Depending on the nature of your business, there are numerous training programs that you may be required to provide to your employees on an annual basis.

For example, if you have employees who work with hazardous chemicals, you have an obligation to provide training to them annually on the types of chemicals they work with, measures they can take to prevent exposure to the hazardous effects of those chemicals and what needs to be done in the event an exposure does occur. Additionally, most employment law attorneys recommend annual training on your harassment policy for both employees and supervisors. Now is the time you should begin planning and scheduling which training programs you want and need to provide to employees.

Employment Laws in 2017: President-elect Donald Trump brings a new dynamic to the White House. He and his administration can affect a number of laws that are or were set to go into effect. From the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime rules (which were supposed to go into effect December 1, 2016) to the requirement that federal contractors provide paid sick leave and the Fair and Safe Workplaces Act requiring federal contractors to report their violations of employment laws, there are a number of changes that could occur. It's important for business executives to stay abreast of employment law changes that may occur during the New Year.

Contributed by the Employers Association Forum, Inc. (EAF). EAF is a non-profit corporate membership-based association dedicated to serving the business and HR communities with world-class HR tools, hotlines & legal compliance, news & trends, surveys & economic data, benefits & insurance, risk management, training & consulting, and leadership & organizational development. Click here to learn more about EAF membership benefits <http://eafinc.org/about-eaf/value-of-membership/>.