

Immigration raid nets 81 at Pennsylvania plant

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ALLENTOWN, Pa. -- Federal agents arrested 81 suspected illegal immigrants during a raid at a manufacturing plant in the Poconos. The company said an agency that provides temporary workers was responsible.

All the workers arrested Tuesday at Iridium Industries Inc.'s Artube division have been placed in removal proceedings for eventual deportation, said Ernestine Fobbs, a spokeswoman with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

She declined to say what led to the raid. The East Stroudsburg company on the New Jersey border about 70 miles north of Philadelphia makes plastic tubes for lotions and other consumer products, according to its Web site.

The arrested immigrants, from Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia and Ecuador, were taken to detention centers for processing, Fobbs said.

Iridium's plant manager, Wayne Migliaccio, said Wednesday the raid was focused on a temp agency that supplied workers to the plant, not on Iridium itself.

"(ICE) Special Agent Jason Rundell's first words to me were, 'You are not the target here. You are the victim,'" Migliaccio said in a statement e-mailed to the media. "Rundell said that the raid was aimed at one particular temporary employment agency which was operating in the area."

Neither Migliaccio nor government officials identified the temp agency.

Federal agents have carried out several similar raids in recent months as part of a national effort to crack down on illegal hiring.

Last week, federal agents raided a food processing plant in Oregon and detained more than 165 workers on immigration, illegal document and identity theft charges. In December, more than 1,200 immigrant workers were arrested at Swift & Co. meatpacking plants in six states.