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## **Businesses Told Penalties Severe if They Don't Comply with Immigration Law**

**By Mary Sell**  
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If you hire your mom to work for you, E-Verify her.

That was the message Wednesday to the about 200 business owners who attended an information session on complying with the law that was signed this summer.

Among other things, the law requires every business in the state, no matter how small, to enroll in and use the federal E-Verify system. Every new employee, no matter where they're from, must be "E-Verified" as of April 1, 2012. Government contractors must enroll by Jan. 1, 2012.

"The bottom line is that we are going to have to use I-9s (the federal form that employees and employers must complete). Get comfortable with E-Verify and if you are put on notice that you are employing illegal immigrants, you are going to have to terminate them," said John Hargrove, one of four attorneys participating in the panel discussion organized by Alabama Employers for Immigration Reform.

Though the law mandates the use of the system that will tell an employer if an employee is authorized to work, there are no penalties for not using it.

Those come if a business owner is found to have knowingly employed illegal workers. The first violation results in a three-year probationary period. A second violation will direct governing bodies to permanently revoke the employer's business licenses and permits specific to the business location where the unauthorized employees performed work. Subsequent violations will "direct the applicable governing bodies to forever suspend the business licenses and permit of the employer throughout the state."

"Strike three, you're out," Hargrove said.

There's another incentive to enroll in E-Verify starting Sept. 1. Eventually, the list of participating employers will be published and updated on the Internet.

"Enrolling in E-Verify is not confidential," said attorney Tom Eden.

Eden said government entities will look at the list before doing business with companies.

"Plenty of people will be cut out of being a governmental contractor," he said.