

10 things you need to know about: E-Verify

E-Verify, an electronic employment verification system, is used to verify that new employees are authorized to work in the United States. Employment verification's goal is to reduce illegal migration by making it harder for unauthorized immigrants to get jobs.

- 1 The current employment verification process, the paper-based Form I-9, was created in 1986.** Before that time, it was not illegal to hire unauthorized immigrants.
- 2 E-Verify was created in 1997 as the "Basic Pilot Program,"** and was given its current name in 2007. The system allows registered employers to verify data presented by an employee against DHS and Social Security Administration databases.
- 3 Today, E-Verify is voluntary for most employers in most states.** E-Verify is already mandatory for companies that contract with the federal government. Nearly 20 states have also passed legislation making E-Verify mandatory for use by all or some employers. Currently more than 600,000 employers are enrolled to use the program.
- 4 Mandatory E-Verify by all employers nationwide for new hires is often proposed in immigration reform legislation,** including in a bill passed this year by the House Judiciary Committee.
- 5 Because E-Verify tells employers who is allowed to work in the country and who is not, accuracy in the system is critical.** E-Verify can make two important types of mistakes: rejecting a work-authorized person who should be approved and approving unauthorized workers who should be rejected.
- 6 E-Verify is generally good at approving people who are authorized to work.** In 2009, less than .5 percent of all E-Verify cases were mistaken rejections. Those numbers continued to drop over the next five years.
- 7 The most common reasons for wrongful rejections are errors in government databases and employers' failure to notify workers who are rejected so they can correct their records.** Despite the low percentages, these errors can cause significant inconvenience for employers and workers alike.
- 8 E-Verify has had more difficulty detecting unauthorized workers.** In 2008, E-Verify only rejected about 47 percent of unauthorized workers checked in the system, mainly because the system was not good at detecting legitimate documents used by the wrong person.
- 9 Since 2008, E-Verify has been updated with features designed to cut down on erroneous approvals,** including photographs from U.S. passport and immigration databases for comparison, a function to determine drivers' license authenticity, and screening for documents used by more than one person.
- 10 While these efforts should improve the system's ability to detect unauthorized workers,** there are no recent studies to confirm this.