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What Employers Need to Know about New Enforcement of Alien Registration Requirements

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In April 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began actively enforcing long-standing federal noncitizen registration laws that had been essentially inactive for years. Many noncitizens living in the United States may not realize they are now required to 1) register with DHS; and 2) carry proof of registration at all times. Failing to comply could result in serious consequences including fines, criminal charges/imprisonment, or even deportation.

To avoid the risk of losing members of their workforce, employers should inform any noncitizen employees about these requirements and consider providing access to legal help to ensure their employees are in compliance.

These Questions and Answers outline who must register, how to do it, and what's at stake.

1. What is “alien registration”?

Alien registration is a federal legal requirement under Section 262 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). It requires most noncitizens who remain in the U.S. for more than 30 days to register with DHS, provide biometric information (like fingerprints), and carry evidence of registration at all times if age 18 or older.

2. Why is this being enforced now?

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14159, directing DHS to treat failure to register as a civil and criminal enforcement priority. As of April 11, 2025, DHS began enforcing this mandate through a revised rulemaking process.

3. Who must register?

You must register if:

- You are 14 or older and have been in the U.S. for more than 30 days;
- You entered the U.S. without inspection or parole;
- You were not fingerprinted during your visa application or entry;
- You are the parent or guardian of a child under 14 who has not been registered;

- You are a child who just turned 14 and were previously registered by a parent.

4. Who is exempt from registration?

You are exempt if you are:

- A holder of an A or G visa (diplomatic or international representatives);
- An American Indian born in Canada under INA § 289;
- A member of the Texas Band of Kickapoo Indians;
- A nonimmigrant who is waived from fingerprinting by DHS (e.g., diplomats, certain short-term visitors under reciprocal arrangements).

5. How do I know if I've already registered?

You are likely already registered if:

- You filed a qualifying form such as:
  - Form I-485 (adjustment of status),
  - Forms I-687, I-698, I-700, I-817, etc.,
- You were fingerprinted (biometrics) by USCIS;
- You were issued any of the following:
  - I-94/I-94W
  - Green card (I-551)
  - Employment Authorization Document (I-766)
  - Notice to Appear (I-862) or other DHS-issued removal notices
  - Border Crossing Card (I-185/I-186)

6. What does not count as registration?

The following do not satisfy the registration requirement:

- A state driver's license or ID
- An application for TPS, DACA, or asylum without an approved registration form or DHS fingerprinting
- Entering via land border as a Canadian or Mexican national without receiving DHS documentation

7. How do I register if I haven't already?

If you are not registered:

1. Create a USCIS online account at https://my.uscis.gov
2. Complete Form G-325R (Biographic Information – Registration)
3. Wait for a Biometrics Appointment Notice
4. Attend your biometrics appointment at a USCIS Application Support Center

5. After processing, download your Proof of Alien Registration PDF from your USCIS account

Note: This document must be carried at all times if you are 18 or older.

8. Is there a fee to register?

Currently, registration is free, including the biometric appointment. DHS is considering a $30 biometric services fee in the future.

9. What happens if I don't register?

Failure to register or carry proof of registration may result in:

- A misdemeanor charge
- Fines up to $5,000
- Up to six months in jail
- Deportation proceedings under INA § 237

False statements during registration may also lead to criminal prosecution and deportation.

10. After registering, what else do I need to do?

You must:

- Carry your registration document at all times if age 18 or older
- File AR-11 with USCIS within 10 days of any address change
- Re-register if you were registered as a child and just turned 14

11. Can I use the registration document for work or immigration benefits?

No. Alien registration is not an immigration status and does not provide work authorization, public benefits, or protection from removal. It simply satisfies a legal obligation under INA § 262.

12. Who can help with the registration process?

A qualified immigration attorney can help.

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