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ATTENTION ALL EMPLOYERS: REVISED I-9 FORM NOW REQUIRED

All employers are responsible for completing and keeping on file a Form I-9 for each of their employees. This Form is required for both citizens and non-citizens. The Form is used to verify employees' authorization to work in the United States, and only certain documentation is acceptable to prove employment eligibility. Acceptable documents are listed on the back of the form. Completed I-9's must be kept by the employer either for 3 years after the employee's date of hire or for one year after employment is terminated, whichever is later. The forms must be available for inspection by authorized U.S. government officials (i.e., Immigration and Customs Enforcement or the Department of Labor).

On November 7, 2007, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a revised Form I-9, which should be used for all employees hired on or after 11/7/2007. The I-9 was revised to reduce the number of documents that employers may accept during the employment verification process. The new Form does not need to be completed for existing employees; however, if an employee requires re-verification, the revised Form must be used.

The most notable change to the revised Form is the elimination of the following five documents as acceptable proof of employment eligibility: Certificate of U.S. Citizenship; Certificate of Naturalization; Alien Registration Receipt Card;

Unexpired Reentry Permit; and the Unexpired Refugee Travel Document. The new Form allows one new acceptable document: the Unexpired Employment Authorization Document.

Another important change is that the new Form I-9 does not require that the employee provide a Social Security number unless the employer participates in E-Verify (a voluntary USCIS program). Also, employers now have the option of signing and retaining the form electronically rather than paper copies.

Please note that although the revised Form I-9 is available in English and Spanish, only employers in Puerto Rico may complete either version of the Form. All employers may use the Spanish version as a translation guide for Spanish-speaking employees, but must complete and retain the English version for their official files.

The new Form I-9 can be downloaded at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf>. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, along with the USCIS, has published a Handbook for Employers containing instructions for completing the I-9 form. The handbook can be found at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/m-274.pdf>.

ATTENTION CORPORATIONS & LLC'S: FILE YOUR ANNUAL REPORT NOW!

If you are a corporation (INC) or limited liability company (LLC), you are required by state law to file an Annual Report with the Florida Department of State every year and pay the appropriate filing fee.

The Annual Report costs \$150 for corporations and \$50 for LLC's. It is simply a way for you to update the State of Florida on any changes to your company's information, such as your address, any added or deleted corporate officers, etc. If you have added or deleted officers of your company, now is the time to tell the State by reporting the new officers and/or deleted officers on your Annual Report. This is very important if you are in the construction industry and you have added an officer who needs to get a workers' compensation exemption. Corporate officers and LLC owners cannot apply for or receive a workers' comp exemption until they are listed on the State of Florida's corporate database.

If you do not report changes to your business information on your Annual Report, you will have to pay an additional fee to file an amendment to your Articles.

Your Annual Report is due by May 1st. If you do not file it by that time and pay the appropriate fee, the state will assess a \$400 fine and possibly dissolve your corporation or LLC. If this happens, you can lose your workers' compensation exemptions because your company is no longer in good standing with the State.

WORKERS' COMP: A YEAR OF CHANGE

**By David Langham, Deputy Chief Judge of
Compensation Claims for Florida**

Florida workers' compensation has changed over the last 20 years. The legislature has changed the law repeatedly. Benefits for injured workers have been reduced. Changes have produced large reductions in the cost that Florida employers pay. Reporting and litigation rules have changed. Computers and the internet have made collecting and reporting information easier for employers, insurance companies and the State. The changes of the last 20 years have obviously affected injured workers and employers. However, doctors, physical therapists, chiropractors, attorneys,

insurance companies, and other businesses have also felt these changes.

In most cases, injured workers are provided benefits by their employer without argument. In some cases, the worker wants some benefit that the employer will not provide. This may be a different doctor, a different kind of doctor, a medical test, or some form of lost wage replacement. Such disagreements are written on a form called a "petition." Each petition might contain only one issue, such as a different doctor, or might list many issues. The Office of Judges of Compensation Claims ("OJCC") decides most of these disagreements.

Computers and the internet have changed the way people find, store and share information. The OJCC was slow to accept computers and the internet, but recently has worked hard to use computers and the internet to help inform employers and injured workers. Information about cases is now on the internet for public viewing, including copies of the orders about each case entered by Judges. The public can also use the internet to view the schedule of hearings about any OJCC case. Lawyers and insurance adjusters can now file documents with the OJCC using the internet. The OJCC is now offering the ability to search all trial orders using the internet. This will allow people to research the outcomes of other people's cases, to better understand how their own case may be decided. Statewide, petition filings in 2007 were almost half what they were in 2003. Of those petitions, some seek benefits for the first time in that case. These are called "new cases." In 2007 far less "new cases" were filed than were filed in 2003. The number of disputes is clearly decreasing. The OJCC is providing better service to Florida's employees and employers. Disputes are being mediated more rapidly, reaching trial quicker, and Judge's decisions are being mailed faster than ever before. The 2007 OJCC Annual Report is available on the OJCC website under the "reports" tab, www.fljcc.org.