

September Newsletter

- **No Texting While Driving.** Effective September 1st, Texas has banned texting while driving. If you have employees that are driving for business, then you want to make sure they comply with the new law.
- **New I-9 form for New Hires.** For new employees hired September 18th or later, the new Employment Eligibility I-9 form will be required. Attached is a copy, if needed, and the link to more information. <https://www.uscis.gov/i-9>.
- **Check current I-9 Forms.** With the “winding” down the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, you should the I-9 forms that you have on file to set up a tickler file in case any of the documents have expiration dates. In addition, a clear defined policy should be in place containing updated policies and procedures.
- **Hurricane Assistance.** The weekend brought record rainfall to the Texas coast, including Houston. If you have employees that have been affected by the storms, consider offering additional time off outside of your regular policies so they can focus on their family and personal situations. Alternate work arrangements, such as flexible hours, may also be an option. If you have an EAP, remind your employees they can be a good resource to discuss their concerns.
 - The state’s disaster unemployment assistance program is an unemployment insurance benefit available especially for victims of disaster. It is available to individuals who:
 - Have applied for and used all regular unemployment benefits from any state, or do not qualify for unemployment benefits.
 - Worked, or were self-employed or were scheduled to work in the disaster area.
 - Can no longer work or perform services because of physical damage or destruction to the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster.
 - Establish that the work or self-employment they can no longer perform was their primary source of income.
 - Cannot perform work or self-employment because of an injury as a direct result of the disaster.
 - Became the breadwinner or major support of a household because of the death of the head of household.
 - Eligible residents are encouraged to apply online at twc.state.tx.us or call 800-939-6631.
- **Overtime Ruling.** If you have been following the Obama-era federal overtime rule, an August 31st ruling ruled that employers don’t have to make any changes. We may see a challenge by the Department of Labor (DOL) or we could see the ruling with changes pop up in the future, but it should be after careful consideration and more input from the business community.