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# returning to your physical office after covid-19?: remember to resume physical inspection of i-9s

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The return to the physical workplace environment after approximately two years of remote work arrangements brings with it many challenges and tasks. What employers may easily overlook is that "normal" in-person Form I-9 administration procedures resume upon employees' return to the physical office. Moreover, physical inspection of documents is also required for employees who were on-boarded during a COVID-19 remote work period.

As a pandemic related measure, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its I-9 flexibility policy on March 20, 2020. Specifically, DHS announced that employers with employees taking physical proximity precautions (i.e. remote work) due to COVID-19 will not be required to review the employee's identity and employment authorization documents in the employee's physical presence. Instead DHS instructed employers to review these documents remotely (e.g., over video link, fax or email, etc.) and obtain, inspect, and retain copies of the documents within three business days after the commencement of employment. Employers were advised to enter "COVID-19" as the reason for the physical inspection delay in Section 2 of the Form I-9.

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