



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

4 ILLEGAL WORKERS ARRESTED AT AVONDALE SHIPYARD

Homeland Security, DoD, U.S. Attorney team up to protect the nation's shipbuilding industry

AVONDALE, La.—Four illegal aliens working at the Northrop Grumman Ship Systems Avondale Shipyard here were arrested Wednesday for using fraudulent documents and making false statements to gain employment, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana Jim Letten and ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Michael A. Holt announced today.

The arrests are part of an ongoing joint U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) criminal investigation of subcontractors operating at the shipyard.

Critical infrastructure such as airports, defense installations and bio-agriculture industries are a primary law enforcement priority of ICE.

As of today, nearly 75 illegal workers have been identified as having access to or have attempted to access Northrop Grumman Ship Systems. Twenty-five have been previously arrested and presented for prosecution in the Eastern District of Louisiana on charges that include using fraudulent documents to gain employment, falsely claiming United States citizenship, or illegal re-entry to the United States after deportation. Of the remaining illegal workers, investigative efforts have resulted in such workers no longer having access to the facility.

"This was a targeted law enforcement action based upon extensive information developed over a long period," said Holt. "Protecting the integrity of the shipbuilding industry in Louisiana is a crucial part of ICE's continuing enforcement strategy. When an individual uses fraudulent documents to get a job, they hide their true identity and history. We need to know exactly who is working on our critical infrastructure programs."

“On behalf of the Department of Justice, I offer my sincerest thanks to the fine special agents from ICE and DCIS for their thoroughness, professionalism, and resolve in concluding this important phase to an ongoing operation, which itself is so critical to both industrial and national security,” Letten said. “Because national security is our absolute top priority, it is imperative that we operate seamlessly and in partnerships precisely as this one to use all of the resources at our disposal to make absolutely sure that the industries that provide for our defense and commerce are not vulnerable to, or threatened by individuals who operate under fraudulent identities.”

Under federal law, employers who knowingly hire or refer unauthorized workers face criminal prosecution and substantial fines.

To aid employers with the screening process, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services operates the Basic Pilot Program, a Web-based system that businesses can use to verify the employment eligibility of newly hired workers. Nationwide, there are more than 15,000 employer sites linked into the Basic Pilot Program. Interested employers may call 1-888-464-4218 to obtain more information about the program.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.