

EEOC Issues New Guidelines On National Origin Discrimination

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Earlier this week, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued new guidelines on national origin discrimination. These extensive guidelines, which update those issued in 2002, define what constitutes national origin discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and provide more than 30 examples as well as “promising practices” that can help employers avoid such discrimination. Title VII is wide-reaching, applying to employers with 15 or more full- or part-time employees. The new guidelines offer the following definition of national origin discrimination: “discrimination because an individual (or his or her ancestors) is from a certain place or has the physical, cultural, or linguistic characteristics of a particular national origin group.” The place of origin may be a country (even the United States), a former country, or a geographic region. Also included is harassment, as well as discrimination based on the belief (as opposed to the fact) that someone belongs to a certain national origin group, association with someone of a particular group, and even citizenship status if it has the purpose or effect of discriminating based on national origin. Given the increasing emphasis on diversity in workplaces across the country and the broad application of Title VII, businesses would be well-served to increase the attention paid to national origin discrimination. The [EEOC guidelines can be found here](#). The EEOC also created a [Q&A section](#) and a [Fact Sheet](#), which is aimed at small-business owners.

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