

# Mobile County Commission approves policy penalizing companies that hire illegal aliens

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MOBILE, Ala. -- Responding to concerns from local labor groups, the [Mobile County Commission](#) voted Monday to create a policy penalizing companies that hire illegal workers on larger public works projects.

Effective Oct. 1, companies "providing more than \$50,000 or more in labor, materials or supplies for a public works contract" in the county will have to make employee records available for inspection and will be subject to random audits, according to the policy.

Noting that the employment of undocumented workers was becoming an industry-wide problem, Commissioner [Merceria Ludgood](#) proposed the worker policy that was adopted Monday.

"We can monitor and control what happens with county contracts," she said, adding that she would have to review the separate policy requested by Nodine before commenting further.

Donnie Adams, business manager for the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#) Local 505, called the action "a step in the right direction."

"We should have zero tolerance," Adams said afterward. "With the kind of unemployment we're facing, it's kind of a slap in the face."

Union representatives and others have rallied several times locally to raise concerns about possible illegal workers involved in construction at the [ThyssenKrupp steel plant](#) in northern Mobile County.

Adams said Monday that he plans to address [Mobile's City Council](#) again on the same issue: "We're going to go back and demand a similar policy."

Companies will be in violation of Mobile County's policy if they have three or more undocumented workers assigned to one or more county contracts. Subcontractors are subject to the same rules. Violators will be barred from bidding on such projects for two years.

Contractors can avoid violating the policy by either:

• Hiring workers through a local, state or federal work program, the state of Alabama Employment Service or a third-party employer that verifies Social Security numbers and the legal status of workers.

• Making use of federal electronic verification of worker eligibility, also known as the [E-Verify Program](#).

After Monday's vote, Commissioner Stephen Nodine asked County Attorney Jay Ross to draft a separate policy that would include state projects where county money was being used. That proposal should be presented at the Aug. 24 commission meeting, Ross said.

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