

**TITLE 8 - ALIENS AND NATIONALITY**  
**CHAPTER 12 - IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY**  
**SUBCHAPTER II - IMMIGRATION**  
**Part VIII - General Penalty Provisions**

**§ 1324c. Penalties for document fraud**

**(a) Activities prohibited**

It is unlawful for any person or entity knowingly—

- (1) to forge, counterfeit, alter, or falsely make any document for the purpose of satisfying a requirement of this chapter or to obtain a benefit under this chapter,
- (2) to use, attempt to use, possess, obtain, accept, or receive or to provide any forged, counterfeit, altered, or falsely made document in order to satisfy any requirement of this chapter or to obtain a benefit under this chapter,
- (3) to use or attempt to use or to provide or attempt to provide any document lawfully issued to or with respect to a person other than the possessor (including a deceased individual) for the purpose of satisfying a requirement of this chapter or obtaining a benefit under this chapter,
- (4) to accept or receive or to provide any document lawfully issued to or with respect to a person other than the possessor (including a deceased individual) for the purpose of complying with section 1324a (b) of this title or obtaining a benefit under this chapter, or
- (5) to prepare, file, or assist another in preparing or filing, any application for benefits under this chapter, or any document required under this chapter, or any document submitted in connection with such application or document, with knowledge or in reckless disregard of the fact that such application or document was falsely made or, in whole or in part, does not relate to the person on whose behalf it was or is being submitted, or
- (6)
  - (A) to present before boarding a common carrier for the purpose of coming to the United States a document which relates to the alien's eligibility to enter the United States, and
  - (B) to fail to present such document to an immigration officer upon arrival at a United States port of entry.

**(b) Exception**

This section does not prohibit any lawfully authorized investigative, protective, or intelligence activity of a law enforcement agency of the United States, a State, or a subdivision of a State, or of an intelligence agency of the United States, or any activity authorized under chapter 224 of title 18.

**(c) Construction**

Nothing in this section shall be construed to diminish or qualify any of the penalties available for activities prohibited by this section but proscribed as well in title 18.

**(d) Enforcement**

**(1) Authority in investigations**

In conducting investigations and hearings under this subsection—

- (A) immigration officers and administrative law judges shall have reasonable access to examine evidence of any person or entity being investigated,
- (B) administrative law judges, may, if necessary, compel by subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence at any designated place or hearing, and
- (C) immigration officers designated by the Commissioner may compel by subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence at any designated place prior to the filing of a complaint in a case under paragraph (2).

In case of contumacy or refusal to obey a subpoena lawfully issued under this paragraph and upon application of the Attorney General, an appropriate district court of the United States may issue an order requiring compliance with such subpoena and any failure to obey such order may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof.

**(2) Hearing**

**(A) In general**

Before imposing an order described in paragraph (3) against a person or entity under this subsection for a violation of subsection (a) of this section, the Attorney General shall provide the person or entity with notice and, upon request made within a reasonable time (of not less than 30 days, as established by the Attorney General) of the date of the notice, a hearing respecting the violation.

**(B) Conduct of hearing**

Any hearing so requested shall be conducted before an administrative law judge. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of section 554 of title 5. The hearing shall be held at the nearest practicable place to the place where the person or entity resides or of the place where the alleged violation occurred. If no hearing is so requested, the Attorney General's imposition of the order shall constitute a final and unappealable order.

**(C) Issuance of orders**

If the administrative law judge determines, upon the preponderance of the evidence received, that a person or entity has violated subsection (a) of this section, the administrative law judge shall state his findings of fact and issue and cause to be served on such person or entity an order described in paragraph (3).

**(3) Cease and desist order with civil money penalty**

With respect to a violation of subsection (a) of this section, the order under this subsection shall require the person or entity to cease and desist from such violations and to pay a civil penalty in an amount of—

**(A)** not less than \$250 and not more than \$2,000 for each document that is the subject of a violation under subsection (a) of this section, or

**(B)** in the case of a person or entity previously subject to an order under this paragraph, not less than \$2,000 and not more than \$5,000 for each document that is the subject of a violation under subsection (a) of this section.

In applying this subsection in the case of a person or entity composed of distinct, physically separate subdivisions each of which provides separately for the hiring, recruiting, or referring for employment, without reference to the practices of, and not under the control of or common control with, another subdivision, each such subdivision shall be considered a separate person or entity.

**(4) Administrative appellate review**

The decision and order of an administrative law judge shall become the final agency decision and order of the Attorney General unless either

**(A)** within 30 days, an official delegated by regulation to exercise review authority over the decision and order modifies or vacates the decision and order, or

**(B)** within 30 days of the date of such a modification or vacation (or within 60 days of the date of decision and order of an administrative law judge if not so modified or vacated) the decision and order is referred to the Attorney General pursuant to regulations, in which case the decision and order of the Attorney General shall become the final agency decision and order under this subsection.

**(5) Judicial review**

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscprint.html>).

A person or entity adversely affected by a final order under this section may, within 45 days after the date the final order is issued, file a petition in the Court of Appeals for the appropriate circuit for review of the order.

**(6) Enforcement of orders**

If a person or entity fails to comply with a final order issued under this section against the person or entity, the Attorney General shall file a suit to seek compliance with the order in any appropriate district court of the United States. In any such suit, the validity and appropriateness of the final order shall not be subject to review.

**(7) Waiver by Attorney General**

The Attorney General may waive the penalties imposed by this section with respect to an alien who knowingly violates subsection (a)(6) of this section if the alien is granted asylum under section 1158 of this title or withholding of removal under section 1231 (b)(3) of this title.

**(e) Criminal penalties for failure to disclose role as document preparer**

**(1)** Whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Service, knowingly and willfully fails to disclose, conceals, or covers up the fact that they have, on behalf of any person and for a fee or other remuneration, prepared or assisted in preparing an application which was falsely made (as defined in subsection (f) of this section) for immigration benefits, shall be fined in accordance with title 18, imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both, and prohibited from preparing or assisting in preparing, whether or not for a fee or other remuneration, any other such application.

**(2)** Whoever, having been convicted of a violation of paragraph (1), knowingly and willfully prepares or assists in preparing an application for immigration benefits pursuant to this chapter, or the regulations promulgated thereunder, whether or not for a fee or other remuneration and regardless of whether in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Service, shall be fined in accordance with title 18, imprisoned for not more than 15 years, or both, and prohibited from preparing or assisting in preparing any other such application.

**(f) Falsely make**

For purposes of this section, the term “falsely make” means to prepare or provide an application or document, with knowledge or in reckless disregard of the fact that the application or document contains a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or material representation, or has no basis in law or fact, or otherwise fails to state a fact which is material to the purpose for which it was submitted.

(June 27, 1952, ch. 477, title II, ch. 8, § 274C, as added Pub. L. 101–649, title V, § 544(a), Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 5059; amended Pub. L. 102–232, title III, § 306(c)(5)(A), Dec. 12, 1991, 105 Stat. 1752; Pub. L. 103–416, title II, § 219(r), Oct. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 4317; Pub. L. 104–208, div. C, title II, §§ 212(a)–(d), 213, 220, title III, §§ 308(g)(10)(D), 379 (a), Sept. 30, 1996, 110 Stat. 3009–570, 3009–571, 3009–575, 3009–625, 3009–649.)

**Amendments**

1996—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(a)(1), inserted “or to obtain a benefit under this chapter” before comma at end.

Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(a)(2), inserted “or to obtain a benefit under this chapter” before comma at end.

Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(a)(3), inserted “or with respect to” after “issued to” and “or obtaining a benefit under this chapter” after “of this chapter” and struck out “or” at end.

Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(a)(4), inserted “or with respect to” after “issued to” and “or obtaining a benefit under this chapter” after “section 1324a (b) of this title” and substituted “, or” for the period at end.

Subsec. (a)(5), (6). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(a)(5), added pars. (5) and (6).

Subsec. (d)(1)(C). Pub. L. 104–208, § 220, added subpar. (C).

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscp.html>).

Subsec. (d)(3)(A), (B). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(c), substituted “each document that is the subject of a violation under subsection (a) of this section” for “each document used, accepted, or created and each instance of use, acceptance, or creation”.

Subsec. (d)(4). Pub. L. 104–208, § 379(a)(2), substituted “the final agency decision and order under this subsection” for “a final order under this subsection”.

Pub. L. 104–208, § 379(a)(1), substituted “unless either (A) within 30 days, an official delegated by regulation to exercise review authority over the decision and order modifies or vacates the decision and order, or (B) within 30 days of the date of such a modification or vacation (or within 60 days of the date of decision and order of an administrative law judge if not so modified or vacated) the decision and order is referred to the Attorney General pursuant to regulations” for “unless, within 30 days, the Attorney General modifies or vacates the decision and order”.

Subsec. (d)(7). Pub. L. 104–208, § 308(g)(10)(D), substituted “withholding of removal under section 1231 (b)(3) of this title” for “withholding of deportation under section 1253 (h) of this title”.

Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(d), added par. (7).

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 104–208, § 213, added subsec. (e).

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104–208, § 212(b), added subsec. (f).

1994—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 103–416 substituted “chapter 224 of title 18” for “title V of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970 (18 U.S.C. note prec. 3481)”.

1991—Subsec. (a)(2) to (4). Pub. L. 102–232 inserted “or to provide” after “receive” in pars. (2) and (4) and “or to provide or attempt to provide” after “attempt to use” in par. (3).

### **Effective Date of 1996 Amendment**

Section 212(e) of div. C of Pub. L. 104–208 provided that: “Section 274C(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1324c (f)], as added by subsection (b), applies to the preparation of applications before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act [Sept. 30, 1996].”

Amendment by section 308(g)(10)(D) of Pub. L. 104–208 effective, with certain transitional provisions, on the first day of the first month beginning more than 180 days after Sept. 30, 1996, see section 309 of Pub. L. 104–208, set out as a note under section 1101 of this title.

Amendment by section 379(a) of Pub. L. 104–208 applicable to orders issued on or after Sept. 30, 1996, see section 379(b) of Pub. L. 104–208, set out as a note under section 1324a of this title.

### **Effective Date of 1994 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 103–416 effective as if included in the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101–649, see section 219(dd) of Pub. L. 103–416, set out as a note under section 1101 of this title.

### **Effective Date of 1991 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 102–232 effective as if included in the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101–649, see section 310(1) of Pub. L. 102–232, set out as a note under section 1101 of this title.

### **Effective Date**

Section applicable to persons or entities that have committed violations on or after Nov. 29, 1990, see section 544(d) of Pub. L. 101–649, as amended, set out as an Effective Date of 1990 Amendment note under section 1227 of this title.

### **Abolition of Immigration and Naturalization Service and Transfer of Functions**

For abolition of Immigration and Naturalization Service, transfer of functions, and treatment of related references, see note set out under section 1551 of this title.