

Wal-Mart facility is site of 14 arrests

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Body

Immigration agents have **arrested 14** illegal immigrants who were working for a subcontractor of **Wal-Mart** Stores Inc., which settled an immigration probe this year.

Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement staged the raid on a **Wal-Mart** distribution center in North Platte, Neb., on Dec. 20, the agency said in a statement yesterday. The laborers, all Mexican citizens, worked for Reich Installation Services Inc. of North Platte and were installing shelving.

"Fourteen people at one work **site** is not a small number," immigration spokesman Tim Counts said in an interview. **Wal-Mart** "cooperated fully" with the raid, he said. The agency is a division of the Department of Homeland Security.

Last month, a lawsuit filed in federal court in New Jersey accused **Wal-Mart** of knowingly using companies that hired undocumented workers. The claims are based in part on records unsealed by a federal judge in Arkansas from a U.S. investigation of cleaning contractors hired by **Wal-Mart**. The retailer settled the probe in March by agreeing to pay \$11 million and to improve oversight of its contractors.

"No charges will be brought against **Wal-Mart** or any of our associates," **Wal-Mart** spokeswoman Sarah Clark said of the **arrests** in Nebraska. "As we have said before, we expect our contractors or subcontractors to hire only documented workers, and we will not tolerate anything else."

On Nov. 17, immigration agents raided a **Wal-Mart** distribution center under construction in Pennsylvania, **arresting** 125 suspected illegal immigrant workers. Federal agents searched five subcontractors at the **site**, looking for evidence of money laundering and helping immigrants from Mexico and Central America enter the United States illegally.

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