

# Real Peril Exists in Application of Responsible Corporate Officer Doctrine

[Matthew C. Luzadder](#)

December 9, 2013

In an effort to “change corporate culture,” prosecutors have recently relied more heavily on the Responsible Corporate Officer (RCO) doctrine to hold executives criminally responsible for acts of corporate malfeasances that occur under their watch – even if they have no actual knowledge of the wrongdoing. This article discusses the increased use of the RCO doctrine, including recent cases where company executives were charged with felonies, the implications of the overly aggressive use of the RCO, and possible defenses to employ when representing a client facing the RCO.