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New York Joins California's Efforts in Workplace Violence Prevention with Retail Worker Safety Act

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On September 4, 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law the New York Retail Worker Safety Act ([S8358C/A8947C](#)), a measure designed to enhance the safety of retail workers and address the growing concerns of workplace violence in retail environments. Most provisions of the law will take effect on March 3, 2025, 180 days after its enactment.

Applicability

The law applies to employers with at least 10 retail employees, defined as those working in a retail store for the employer. A "retail store" refers to an establishment that sells consumer commodities at retail and is not primarily engaged in selling food for consumption on the premises.

Key Requirements Effective March 3, 2025

Employers subject to the law will be required to implement several safety measures. To support compliance, the New York Department of Labor will publish a retail workplace violence prevention guidance document, along with a model plan and training program.

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

Employers must adopt a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan, which should include:

- A list of factors or situations that may place retail employees at risk of workplace violence.
- Methods to prevent incidents of workplace violence.
- Information on federal and state legal provisions regarding violence against retail workers, as well as available remedies for victims.
- A statement that retaliation against employees who complain of workplace violence or the presence of factors or situations in the workplace that might place employees at risk of workplace violence or who testify or assist in proceedings related to the law is unlawful.

Employee Training

Employers must provide training on:

- The requirements of the Retail Worker Safety Act.
- Example of measures employees can use to protect themselves from violence.
- De-escalation techniques.
- Active shooter drills.
- Emergency procedures.
- Instructions on using security alarms, panic buttons, and other emergency devices.
- A site-specific list of emergency exits and designated meeting places in case of an emergency.

Training must be provided upon hire and then annually. Newly hired employees must also receive a notice containing the policy and training information.

Panic Button Requirement Effective January 1, 2027

By January 1, 2027, employers with 500 or more retail employees nationwide will be required to provide access to panic buttons throughout the workplace or equip each employee with a wearable or mobile, company-issued panic button.

Nationwide Trend

The enactment of the New York Retail Worker Safety Act closely follows California's Workplace Violence Prevention law, which took effect on July 1, 2024. We expect to see an increasing trend in workplace violence prevention laws across the country in the near future.

For more information on developing and implementing workplace violence prevention plans, please contact [Rachel Conn](#) and [Andrea Chavez](#). For more information about the new California law, check out our [blog](#) and [webinar](#) on the topic.