

COMPLIANCE

YOUR WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION OBLIGATIONS

A S THE one-year anniversary of California's workplace violence prevention law approaches, employers will need to take steps to ensure their continued compliance.

The law requires all California employers with 10 or more staff to have a workplace violence prevention plan, provide training and revisit their plan every year.

Cal/OSHA is actively enforcing all aspects of it during its standard workplace safety inspections. Noncompliance with SB 553 can result in fines ranging from \$18,000 to \$25,000 per violation.

Updating the plan

Employers should revisit their workplace violence prevention plan annually to make sure it's up to date. Pay close attention to parts that identify a certain individual to whom employees are required to report as well as new threats that you have identified.

Prevention Plan Basics

- Identifies who is responsible for implementing and managing the plan.
- Includes details for communicating with employees regarding workplace violence matters, including how to report a violent incident, threat or other workplace violence concern; effective ways to alert employees to the presence of a workplace violence emergency; and how to obtain help from staff assigned to respond and/or law enforcement.
- Includes procedures for post-incident response and investigation.
- Requires the employer to identify, evaluate and correct workplace violence hazards. This may need to be updated if a new hazard is identified.
- Requires the employer to post incident response and investigations.

Don't forget annual training

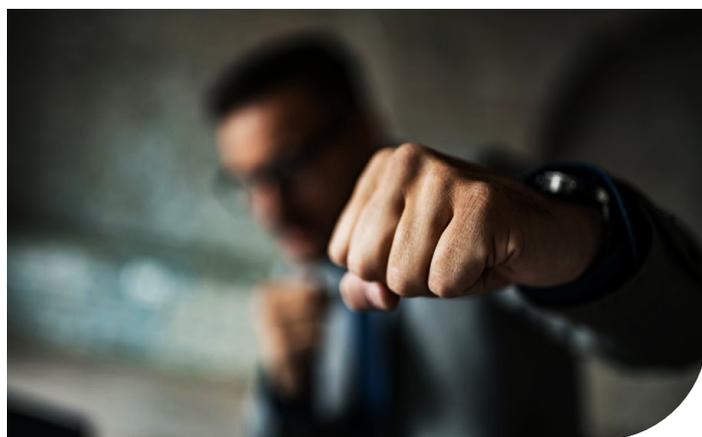
Training must be conducted upon hire and once a year thereafter. Training must include:

- An overview of the plan and how to participate in implementing it.
- How to report workplace violence incidents.
- Job-specific violence hazards and preventive measures.
- Explaining the the violent incident log and how to obtain related records.

A final word

Employers are required to keep up-to-date records, including any incidents in the past year, and retain them for at least five years.

While we are only one year into the law, it's important that employers foster open communication and encourage employees to report potential hazards and concerns without fear of retaliation.



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Remind Workers to Drink Water and Take Cool-Down Breaks

Current rules refresher

For outdoor workplaces, shade must be present when temperatures are greater than 80°F. When temperatures are less than 80°F, shade must be available upon request.

Shade and cool-down areas must be:

- Blocked from direct sunlight.
- Large enough to accommodate the number of workers on rest breaks so they can sit comfortably without touching each other.
- As close as possible to the work areas.

Encourage workers to take preventive cool-down rest periods and allow those who ask for one to take it.

When the temperature reaches 95°F, employers are required to implement high-heat procedures which must include:

- Observing and communicating effectively with workers.
- Reminding workers to drink water and take breaks.

Employers are also required to:

- Establish, implement and maintain an HIPP.
- Provide first aid or emergency response to any worker showing signs or symptoms of heat illness.
- Closely observe new workers and newly assigned workers in hot areas during a 14-day acclimatization period, as well as all employees working during a heat wave.
- Provide training on the HIPP to workers and supervisors.