

New York's Retail Workplace Violence Prevention Bill Signed Into Law by Governor Hochul

Article By:

Stefan Borovina

Karen Tynan

Robert C. Rodriguez

After a summer hiatus, the New York Retail Worker Safety Act ([S8358C/A8947C](#)) was delivered to Governor Kathy Hochul on September 4, 2024, and signed into law the same day.

Quick Hits

- On September 4, 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law the New York Retail Worker Safety Act, a comprehensive measure intended to increase worker safety and address the hazard of workplace violence in retail settings.
- The act, which applies to retail employers with at least ten employees and requires, among other things, assessments of potential workplace violence hazards, adoption of written workplace violence prevention policies, and workplace violence prevention training, will take effect on March 1, 2025, 180 days after its enactment.
- Every employer with 500 or more retail employees nationwide will be required to provide access to panic buttons or mobile phone-based panic buttons throughout their New York workplaces by January 1, 2027.

Now that the bill has been signed into law, all New York employers with at least ten employees who work in a retail store will have to be in compliance within 180 days. To comply with the [Retail Worker Safety Act](#), retail employers—i.e., “any person, entity, business, corporation, partnership, limited liability company, or an association employing at least ten retail employees ... [at] a store that sells consumer commodities at retail and which is not primarily engaged in the sale of food for consumption on the premises”—will have to implement written workplace violence prevention policies that address workplace violence risk factors and prevention methods.

Employers will also have to provide information and interactive training to employees on various workplace violence issues. These include “measures that retail employees can use to protect themselves when faced with workplace violence,” such as de-escalation tactics, active shooter drills, emergency procedures, security alarms, panic buttons, and other emergency devices. Employers will

have to provide this training to each employee upon hire, and then at least annually thereafter.

Perhaps the most significant (and controversial) provision of the act is the requirement for employee access to panic buttons. This provision goes into effect on January 1, 2027, and it applies to any employer with 500 or more retail employees *nationwide*. Employers that must comply with this section may choose to provide panic buttons throughout their workplaces or mobile phone–based panic buttons.

According to the act, the panic button may be a physical device placed at easily accessible locations in the workplace or a button on wearable or mobile phone technology used by employees. When activated, it would promptly alert the local 9-1-1 public safety answering point, relay the employee's location, and dispatch local law enforcement to the site. The act prohibits wearable and mobile phone–based panic buttons from “be[ing] used to track employee locations except when the panic button is triggered.”

Next Steps

While there is still time to implement the required workplace violence prevention program and training, the 180-day compliance deadline will soon be here. Retail employers may want to take the opportunity now to start evaluating their workplaces and potential risk factors to ensure that its programs and trainings best fit its workplace locations and business operations.

© 2025, Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C., All Rights Reserved.

National Law Review, Volume XIV, Number 250

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/new-yorks-retail-workplace-violence-prevention-bill-signed-law-governor-hochul>