

Implementing NY's Retail Worker Safety Act: A New Amendment Means Changes for Employers of All Sizes

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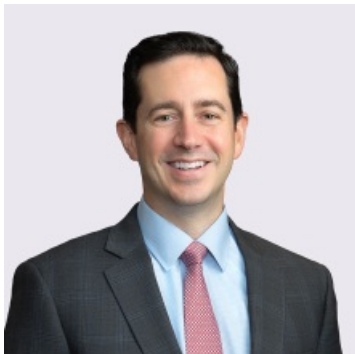
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Takeaways

- The amended New York RWSA delays the law's effective date to 6/2/25.
- Retail employers with fewer than 50 employees will have to provide workplace violence prevention training every other year, instead of annually, as large retailers will have to do. All retailers must provide training upon hire.
- Larger retail employers will not be required to install panic buttons at their locations, but they must provide employees with a silent response button to request immediate internal assistance when faced with an emergency.

Related link

- [What Responsibilities Do Employers Have Under New York State's Retail Worker Safety Act?](#)

Article

Under the recent [amendment](#) to the New York Retail Worker Safety Act (RWSA), retail employers have until June 2, 2025, to implement workplace violence prevention programs. Along with modifying the effective date, the amendment eliminated the panic button requirement for employers with at least 500 retail employees statewide, pivoted away from requiring trainings annually to every two years for smaller retail employers, and limited the number of non-English languages for which an employer must provide workplace violence prevention policies and trainings.

Background

In September 2024, Governor Kathy Hochul [signed the RWSA](#), requiring retail employers to develop and implement programs to prevent workplace violence in their respective retail locations. The requirements:

- Adopt a written retail workplace violence prevention policy;
- Develop and implement training programs to prevent workplace violence; and
- Install panic buttons throughout the workplace for retail employers with at least 500 employees nationwide.

The RWSA was amended on Feb. 14, 2025, in an effort to address various concerns, including the timeframe for compliance.

Amendment

Initially set to take effect on March 4, 2025, retail employers will have until June 2, 2025, to implement and administer workplace violence prevention policy and training programs required by the RWSA.

The retail industry awaits a model training program and prevention policy to be issued by the New York State Department of Labor (NYDOL).

Under the amendment, the NYDOL commissioner will be required to prepare a template policy and training program only in the 12 most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the State of New York.

Workplace Training

Retail employers with fewer than 50 employees will be required to provide workplace violence prevention training upon hire and once every two years thereafter.

The requirement for retail employers with at least 50 employees is unchanged: provide training upon hire and annually.

Silent Response Button

The amendment eliminated the requirement that retail employers with more than 500 employees *nationwide* install panic buttons throughout their workplaces.

Instead, larger employers with more than 500 employees *statewide* must provide their retail employees while they are working with a silent response button to request immediate assistance from a security officer, manager, or supervisor in case of an emergency. The silent response button may be installed in the workplace at an easily accessible location or as a wearable or mobile phone-based button.

The requirement for silent response buttons is scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1, 2027.

Implications for Employers

While awaiting the NYDOL's RWSA-compliant model policy and training program, retail employers should begin to take steps toward compliance now, including:

- Assessing factors in the workplace that might put employees at risk of violence; and
- Determining whether their existing violence prevention programs align with the law's requirements.

Please contact a Jackson Lewis attorney if you have any questions or need assistance to ensure compliance with the RWSA.

(Law Graduate Sheila Krische contributed to this article.)

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