

SB 553 Workplace Violence Prevention Plan Guide

What is SB553?

On Sept. 20, 2023, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 553 into law, which requires covered employers to implement an effective workplace violence prevention plan as part of their Cal/OSHA Injury Illness Prevention Plan. The law also requires employers to provide training on their plan and maintain records of any threats or incidents of violence at the workplace and investigations performed. The new law adds section 6401.9 to the California Labor Code and takes effect July 1, 2024.

Does my organization need to comply with this law?

If you have 10 or more employees working in California or your California work locations are accessible to the public, you are most likely required to comply with the new Section 6401.9 of the California Labor Code unless your organization satisfies one of the following exceptions:

- Your California employees telework from a location of your choice, which is not under the control of the employer
- Your organization is a healthcare facility, service category, or operation covered by or otherwise comply with Section 3342 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations
- Certain department of corrections facilities and law enforcement agencies

What are the high-level requirements for the new Labor Code law?

At a high-level, your organization needs to have the following in place by July 1, 2024:

- Adopt an effective workplace violence prevention plan as part of their Cal/OSHA Injury Illness Prevention Plan
- Maintain a violent incident log for every incident of workplace violence, according to specific requirements
- Provide training to employees and updated training when new workplace hazards are discovered
- Maintain records of workplace violence hazard identification, evaluation, and correction as well as workplace incident investigation records

What should be included in the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan?

California Labor Code section 6401.9(c) spells out the requirements. Employers must create and maintain an “effective” plan that is written, accessible to employees, and specific to the hazards and corrective measures for each work area and operation.

The plan must specifically include the following:

- Names or job titles of the persons responsible for implementing the plan.
- Effective procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees in developing and implementing the plan, including their participation in identifying, evaluating, and correcting workplace violence hazards, designing and implementing training, and reporting and investigating workplace violence incidents.
- Methods to coordinate implementation of the plan with other employers, when applicable. These methods must ensure the provision of required training and that workplace violence incidents are reported, investigated, and reported.
- Effective procedures for the employer to accept and respond to reports of workplace violence and to prohibit retaliation against an employee who makes such a report.
- Effective procedures to ensure employees comply with the plan, which may include recognition of employees who follow the plan, training and retraining programs, disciplinary actions, or any other such means that ensures employee compliance.
- Effective procedures for communicating with employees regarding workplace violence matters, including the following:
 - How an employee can report a violent incident, threat, or other workplace violence concern to the employer or law enforcement without fear of reprisal.
 - How employee concerns will be investigated.
 - How employees will be informed of the results of the investigation and any corrective actions to be taken.
- Effective procedures to respond to actual or potential workplace violence emergencies, including all of the following:
 - Effective means to alert employees of the presence, location, and nature of workplace violence emergencies.
 - Evacuation or sheltering plans that are appropriate and feasible for the worksite.
 - How to obtain help from security personnel, staff assigned to respond to workplace violence emergencies, and law enforcement.

- Procedures for developing and providing required training on the employer's workplace violence prevention plan.
- Assessment procedures to identify and evaluate workplace violence hazards, including scheduled periodic inspections when the plan is first established, after each workplace violence incident, and whenever the employer is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.
- Procedures to correct workplace violence hazards in a timely manner.
- Procedures for post-incident response and investigation.
- Procedures to review the effectiveness of the plan and revise the plan as needed, including procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees in reviewing the plan. The plan must be reviewed at least annually, when a deficiency is observed or becomes apparent, and after a workplace violence incident. The violent incident log, described below, must be reviewed during the periodic review of the plan.
- Other procedures and information as may be required by Cal. OSHA pursuant to later Cal. OSHA proposed standards (12/31/25 proposal deadline and 12/31/26 adoption deadline).



Don't know where to start? You can access Cal OSHA's workplace violence prevention plan template [here](#).

Violent Incident Log Requirements

The new law requires employers to record information in a "violent incident log" for "every" workplace violence incident.

Information recorded in the log must be based on information solicited from employees who experienced the workplace, on witness statements, and on investigation findings.

The information recorded in the log must include all of the following:

- The date, time, and location of the incident.
- A detailed description of the incident.
- Classification of who committed the violence, including whether the perpetrator was a:
 - client or customer
 - family or friend of a client or customer
 - stranger with criminal intent
 - coworker
 - supervisor or manager
 - partner or spouse
 - parent or relative
 - other perpetrator

- Classification of the circumstances at the time of the incident, including, but not limited to, whether the employee was completing usual job duties, working in poorly lit areas, rushed, working during a low staffing level, isolated or alone, unable to get help or assistance, working in a community setting, or working in an unfamiliar or new location.
- Classification of where the incident occurred, such as in the workplace, parking lot or other area outside the workplace, or other area.
- The type of incident, including whether it involved any of the following:
 - Physical attack without a weapon (e.g., biting, choking, grabbing, hair pulling, kicking, punching, slapping, pushing, pulling, scratching, or spitting)
 - Attack with a weapon or object (e.g., firearm, knife, or other object)
 - Threat of physical force or threat of the use of a weapon or other object
 - Sexual assault or threat (e.g., rape, attempted rape, physical display, or unwanted verbal or physical sexual contact)
 - Animal attack
 - Other
- Consequences of the incident, including:
 - Whether security or law enforcement was contacted and their response.
 - Actions taken to protect employees from a continuing threat or from any other hazards identified as a result of the incident.
- Name and job title of the person completing the log and the date completed.

The log must exclude any element of personal identifying information sufficient to allow identification of any person involved in a violent incident, such as the person's name, address, email address, phone number, social security number, or other information that, alone or in combination with other publicly available information, reveals the person's identity.

Record Maintenance and Employee Availability Requirements

Violent Incident Log:

- Must be maintained for at least 5 years
- Cannot include the PII of any person involved in an incident
- Must be available and accessible to employees upon request and at no cost within 15 calendar days of request
- For multi-employer sites, a copy of the log must be provided to the controlling employer

Records of Post Incident Response and Investigation:

- Must be maintained for a minimum of 5 years
- Cannot contain “medical information” (as defined by Cal. Civil Code 56.05(j))
- The new law does not grant or deny employees a right to access these records

Records of Workplace Violence Hazard Identification, Evaluation, and Correction:

- Must be maintained for at least 5 years
- Must be available and accessible to employees upon request and at no cost within 15 calendar days of request

Records of Training as Required by Section 6401.9(e):

- Must be created and maintained for at least 1 year
- Must include training dates, contents or a summary of the training sessions, names and qualifications of persons conducting the training, and names and job titles of all persons attending the training sessions
- Must be available and accessible to employees upon request and at no cost within 15 calendar days of request

Before you put your trust (and your company’s compliance on the line) with a messy and brittle Excel Sheet or Google Doc – consider a solution such as HiveWatch’s Case Management.

The HiveWatch® Case Management feature provides security teams with a centralized location to track incidents, add relevant media and data, and create a comprehensive record to aid in internal and external investigations.

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Training

Once you have your policy established and procedures in place, the employer must provide effective training to all employees.

This training needs to happen when the plan is first established, annually thereafter, when changes are made to the workplace violence prevention plan, and when a new or previously unrecognized hazard has been identified. The training must be on all of the following:

- The workplace violence prevention plan, how to obtain a copy, and how to participate in development and implementation of the employer's plan.
- The definitions and requirements of the new law (Cal. Labor Code 6401.9).
- How to report workplace violence incidents or concerns to the employer or law enforcement without fear of reprisal.
- Workplace violence hazards specific to the employees' jobs, the corrective measures the employer has implemented, how to seek assistance to prevent or respond to violence, and strategies to avoid physical harm.
- The violent incident log required by this law and how to obtain copies of employee accessible records required by this law.
- An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with a person knowledgeable about the workplace violence prevention plan.

Working across your organization

The facets of this new law will require multiple people from varying departments in your organization to work together to get all the pieces, and budget, needed. The law even requires active employee involvement in creating, implementing, and reviewing the plan. Here's who we recommend getting together in a room:

- Legal
- Security and Investigations
- Human Resources
- Compliance

About HiveWatch

HiveWatch is an end-to-end Security Operations Management Platform to simplify and centralize disparate systems and solutions, reduce overwhelming noise, streamline operations, and empower security teams to make data-driven decisions. Built by experienced security professionals, HiveWatch was created to solve some of the industry's biggest challenges with features such as false alarm reduction, lack of security program data and analytics, emergency services communication (911), and device health monitoring. HiveWatch's Case Management product can help satisfy some requirements of the incident log in SB 553.

Learn more at www.hivewatch.com.