


Meeting the Requirements of California's SB 553

Workplace Violence Prevention



 Whistleblowing & Incident Management

 Policy & Procedure Management

 Ethics & Compliance Training

When California creates wide-reaching legislation, the country tends to pay attention. California's SB 553, also known by its intent, Workplace Violence Prevention, establishes the first general industry safety requirements in the U.S. This law requires employers to have established plans and to train their workforce by July 1, 2024 – creating a deadline all California employers, with few exceptions, must adhere to in order to be compliant.

All California employers, with the exception of health care facilities which are covered by different legal requirements and employers with fewer than 10 employees, must develop a workplace violence prevention plan integrated into their Injury and Illness Prevention Plans. Companies headquartered in California and/or have a location in California with 10 or more employees must comply with this law, meaning the impacts are further reaching than just companies with California-based headquarters.

Together SB 428, which was signed into law in September 2023, and SB 553 also amend California's law allowing employers to seek restraining orders on behalf of employees.

Requirements under SB 553

There are three essential requirements California employers need to comply with by July 1, 2024.

1. An employer shall establish, implement and maintain an effective workplace violence prevention plan
2. The employer shall record information in a violent incident log for every workplace violence incident
3. The employer shall provide effective training to employees – training must be completed by July 1, 2024

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan: Employers must develop, implement, and maintain an effective workplace violence prevention plan. This includes designating responsible individuals, involving employees and representatives in plan development, coordinating with other employers when necessary, and implementing procedures for reporting violence, prohibiting retaliation, communicating with employees about violence, identifying hazards, post-incident response, and plan review.

Training and record-keeping: Employers must provide initial and annual training on the plan, keep records of hazard identification and correction, training, workplace violence incidents, and incident investigations for at least five years, and produce them to California and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) upon request

The challenge

Meeting these requirements by the July 1, 2024 deadline poses some challenges, mainly in how to develop and implement the policies, procedures and training across all workforces. Challenges in complying with SB 553 include:

Developing comprehensive plans: Employers may struggle to develop comprehensive plans that meet all the outlined requirements, including active employee involvement, hazard identification and post-incident procedures. Creating and communicating a plan for workplace violence prevention that is both compliant with the law may be especially challenging for smaller organizations that often have fewer resources. For large enterprises, rolling out a far-reaching plan such as this means communicating with thousands or even hundreds of thousands of employees, making the implementation challenging to do consistently.

Record-keeping burden: Maintaining accurate records of incidents, training, and hazard evaluations for five years and being able to produce them upon request by California regulators or OSHA can be resource-intensive and prone to errors. Doing so manually without a purpose-built software is even more challenging, as storing the needed files and having them be easily referenceable is a huge undertaking.

Training compliance: Ensuring all employees receive initial and annual training as mandated by the law can be challenging, especially for larger organizations with diverse workforces and multiple locations. For example, deploying the proper training to teams that may not have company computer access can prove to be an obstacle for many industries.

The solution

Despite the challenges organizations will face in complying with this law, most of the solutions come down to having a systematic approach to developing the plan and policies, documenting any incidents and providing training.

Comprehensive plan development: Employers must designate responsible personnel to oversee plan development, actively involve employees, utilize available resources for internal coordination. Leveraging technology for effective communication and documentation will be crucial to ensure this process is streamlined and maintained consistently.

Streamlined record-keeping: Employers should implement digital systems for record-keeping, ensuring easy access, accurate documentation and timely reporting as required by law. While many organizations rely on internal shared drives and complex file structures, this method is far from fool proof and tends to be error-prone.

Training compliance management: Employers should use a structured approach, leveraging legally vetted training solutions to meet legal requirements and incorporate company-specific information. Automated tracking and reminders can ensure timely completion of training.

Your NAVEX playbook

Complying with California's Workplace Violence Prevention law will require dedicated resources to create and implement the plan. It is advised to avoid ad hoc solutions for this initiative in order to ensure a smooth implementation. NAVEX solutions are designed to help your organization stay compliant with SB 553, here's how

Policy & Procedure Management: Streamline policy development with multiple authors, ensuring policies are distributed and accessible, and automated reminders are sent for annual review as required by law. Policies and procedures to prevent and address incidents of workplace violence are your foundation for success in complying with this law. A purpose-built solution for the creation, distribution and attestation of these policies ensures your team has the information they need, when they need it.

Whistleblowing & Incident Management: NAVEX enables multiple reporting options for workplace violence incidents, ensuring secure investigation and resolution. The Whistleblowing & Incident Management solutions also centralize incident documentation as required by law.

Ethics & Compliance Training: NAVEX's new Workplace Violence course, released in March 2024, provides effective training and is customizable to meet legal requirements and company-specific needs. This training is designed to comply with the requirements listed in the law and also includes an education guide on how to customize the course to address legal requirements and meet the specific needs of your company. The training also facilitates secure employee attestation and direct access to policies as required by the law.

The **NAVEX One Compliance Professional package** provides an all-in-one option to help keep your organization compliant. This package compiles the solutions you need and work together to create an effective solution to stay compliant with the Workplace Violence Prevention law, as well as many other regulations.

These solutions are also available on the NAVEX One platform, which helps you achieve your goals by providing a 360-degree view of your risk and compliance program. With our platform, you can transform fragmented information into a valuable resource that can aid decision-making across all aspects of your business. Learn more about how our solutions can address your essential business priorities, including complying with California's SB 553.

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