Client Alert

California SB 553 Workplace Violence Prevention

WHAT'S NEW: On September 30, 2023, California adopted Senate Bill 553 (SB 553), a bill that requires employers to establish a workplace violence prevention plan (WVPP), document incidents of workplace violence and train employees on how to identify workplace violence hazards. The rule is set to go into effect on July 1, 2024.

WHAT IT MEANS: The new rule affects workplaces in California that have 10 or more employees working at any given time. Employer remote worker's homes are exempt and Healthcare facilities, prisons and law enforcement agencies are exempt as they are currently subject to Title 8, Section 3342.

This law is intended to protect employees from workplace violence which is the second leading cause of workplace fatalities in the United States. The law prohibits "unlawful violence" as defined by Section 646.9 of the Penal Code, and "credible threats of violence" in the workplace. It also prohibits "course of conduct" or patterns of acts over a period of time that pose potential threats to employees.

The law will be enforced by CalOSHA and will expand the current requirement to implement and maintain injury prevention programs (IIPPs) to include Workplace Violence Prevention Plans (WVPPs) and includes the specific information that employers must include in those plans. SB 553- specifically requires employers to:

- Record information on workplace violence incidents in a violent incident log;
- Provide effective WVPP training for employees; and
- Provide ongoing training when new or previously unrecognized workplace violence hazards are identified or when changes to WVPP take place.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review the new law to understand how to update their policies and procedures to comply with SB 553 requirements by July 1, 2024. This includes establishing a WVPP, integrating an injury and illness prevention program, providing employee training, documenting incidents of violence and maintaining adequate records.

Resources are available on the California Department of Industrial Relations CalOSHA website.

Please reach out to your HR Partner if you have any questions.