

Publications

New Year, New California “Workplace Know Your Rights Act”

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CLIENT ALERT | 1.20.2026

California’s Workplace Know Your Rights Act (SB 294) creates new annual notice and emergency-contact obligations for employers starting in 2026.

Effective February 1, 2026, employers must give every current employee, new hire, and union representative a stand-alone written “Know Your Rights” notice each year.

Employers must deliver the notice in a format they normally use for employment communications, such as personal delivery, email, or text, so long as employees can reasonably receive it within one business day.

The notice must explain:

- rights related to workers’ compensation benefits;
- immigration-related protections including notice of workplace inspections and protection from unfair immigration practices;
- the right to organize or engage in concerted activity; and
- constitutional rights when dealing with law enforcement at work, including protections against unreasonable searches and seizures and self-incrimination.

The notice must also include a description of new legal developments that the Labor Commissioner identifies and a list of enforcement agencies that handle the rights described.

Additionally, employers must keep records of compliance for at least three years, including the dates when they provided or sent notices to employees.

The Labor Commissioner has published a template notice in various languages that employers may download and use. Employers must provide the notice to employees in the language the employer normally uses for employment communications if the Labor Commissioner’s template is available in that language; otherwise they may use English. This template will be updated every year.

SB 294 also creates new duties related to emergency contacts. By March 30, 2026, employers must give all existing employees the opportunity to name an emergency contact and to state whether they want that person notified if the employee is arrested or detained. For employees hired after March 30, 2026, employers must provide the opportunity to name an emergency contact at the time of hire. Employers must also allow employees to update this information during employment.

If an employee provides an emergency contact, the employer must notify that contact if the employee is arrested or detained at the worksite. If the arrest or detention occurs off-site during work hours or while performing job duties, the employer must notify the emergency contact if the employer has actual knowledge of the arrest or detention.

SB 294 prohibits retaliation against employees who exercise their rights under the statute, file a complaint, cooperate with an investigation, or assist in enforcement. Failure to comply with the requirements of the statute could result in penalties for employers.