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New York Enacts Violence Prevention Bill for Retailers

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CLIENT ALERT | 9.10.2024

The [New York Retail Worker Safety Act](#) was signed into law on September 4, 2024, by Governor Kathy Hochul. The Act aims to enhance the safety of retail workers in the state and is set to go into effect on March 4, 2025.

The Act mandates that retail employers with ten or more employees conduct assessments of potential workplace violence hazards, adopt written workplace violence prevention policies, and provide workplace violence prevention training. Retailers are required to train their employees on conflict de-escalation and response to workplace violence. This means retailers are expected to conduct a thorough evaluation of the workplace environment and develop effective strategies to mitigate potential threats.

Moreover, large stores with over 500 employees nationwide must install panic buttons in all their New York stores by January 1, 2027. The Act prohibits the use of wearable and mobile phone-based panic buttons to track employee locations unless the panic button is activated. This provision is intended to safeguard employee privacy while ensuring access to emergency assistance.

The Act expands New York's previous efforts to prevent workplace violence. Indeed, a dozen states, including New York, already have a workplace violence prevention law that applies to health care settings. Now, New York joins the ranks of several states broadening such workplace violence prevention efforts to other industries like retail.

Next steps?

Retailers must be in compliance with the Act by March 4, 2025. In the meantime, retail employers should begin evaluating their workplaces and potential risk factors now to ensure that their programs and training are tailored to their specific needs and locations. If you have any questions about this or any other employment-related issue, please contact your Vorys lawyer.