
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1524

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Obras, Scott, Fosse, Hill, Gregerson, Reed, Berry, Parshley, Salahuddin, Peterson, Simmons, Ormsby, Macri, and Pollet)

READ FIRST TIME 02/12/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring compliance with and enforcement of
2 certain workplace standards and requirements applicable to employers
3 of isolated employees; amending RCW 49.60.515 and 49.60.180;
4 prescribing penalties; and providing an effective date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 49.60.515 and 2019 c 392 s 1 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 (1) Every hotel, motel, retail, or security guard entity, or
9 property services contractor, who employs an isolated employee, must:

10 (a) Adopt a sexual harassment policy;

11 (b) Provide mandatory training to the employer's managers,
12 supervisors, and isolated employees to:

13 (i) Prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment in the
14 workplace;

15 (ii) Prevent sexual discrimination in the workplace; (~~and~~)

16 (iii) Educate the employer's workforce regarding protection for
17 isolated employees who report violations of a state or federal law,
18 rule, or regulation; and

19 (iv) Inform isolated employees on how to use panic buttons, and
20 inform managers and supervisors on the responsibility to respond to
21 the use of panic buttons;

1 (c) Provide a list of resources for the employer's isolated
2 employees to utilize. At a minimum, the resources must include
3 contact information of the equal employment opportunity commission,
4 the Washington state human rights commission, and local advocacy
5 groups focused on preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault;
6 ((and))

7 (d) Provide a panic button to each isolated employee. An employer
8 must maintain a record of the purchase and utilization of panic
9 buttons provided to its isolated employees under this section.
10 Records must be provided to the department upon request. The
11 department must publish advice and guidance for employers with fifty
12 or fewer employees relating to this subsection (1)(d). This
13 subsection (1)(d) does not apply to contracted security guard
14 companies licensed under chapter 18.170 RCW; and

15 (e) Document completion of the mandatory training required by
16 this subsection and provide the documentation to the department upon
17 request.

18 (2)(a) A property services contractor shall submit the following
19 to the department on an annual basis on a form or in a manner
20 determined by the department:

21 (i) The date of adoption of the sexual harassment policy required
22 in subsection (1)(a) of this section;

23 (ii) The number of managers, supervisors, and isolated employees
24 trained as required by subsection (1)(b) of this section; and

25 (iii) The physical address of the work location or locations at
26 which janitorial services are provided by workers of the property
27 services contractor, and for each location: (A) The total number of
28 workers or contractors of the property services contractor who
29 perform janitorial services; and (B) the total hours worked.

30 (b) The department must make aggregate data submitted as required
31 in this subsection (2) available upon request.

32 ~~((c) The department may adopt rules to implement this subsection~~
33 ~~(2).))~~

34 (3)(a) The department must investigate if a complaint is filed
35 with the department alleging a violation of this section or if the
36 department has reason to believe that an employer has committed a
37 violation of this section.

38 (b) Except when a violation is otherwise resolved, the department
39 must issue: (i) A citation assessing a civil penalty under (c) of
40 this subsection if it finds a violation has occurred; or (ii) a

1 closure letter detailing any findings if it finds that a violation
2 cannot be substantiated. The notice of a citation or closure letter
3 must be sent to the employer by service of process or using a method
4 by which the mailing can be tracked or the delivery can be confirmed
5 to the last known address.

6 (c) If the department finds a violation of this section, the
7 department may order the employer to pay the department a civil
8 penalty of \$1,000 for each willful violation. For a repeat willful
9 violation, the citation assessing a civil penalty must be at least
10 \$2,000 for each repeat willful violation, but no greater than \$10,000
11 for each repeat willful violation. The department may, at any time,
12 waive or reduce a civil penalty assessed under this section if the
13 department determines that the employer has taken corrective action
14 to resolve the violation. Penalties collected under this section must
15 be deposited into the supplemental pension fund established under RCW
16 51.44.033.

17 (d) An employer who fails to comply with the department's
18 investigation of records within a reasonable time period may not use
19 such records in any appeal to challenge the correctness of any
20 determination by the department.

21 (4) For the purposes of this section:

22 (a) "Department" means the department of labor and industries.

23 (b) "~~(Employee)~~ Isolated employee" means an (~~individual who~~
24 ~~spends a majority of~~) employee who:

25 (i) (A) Performs work in an area where two or more coworkers,
26 supervisors, or a combination thereof are unable to immediately
27 respond to a call of distress or emergency; or (B) spends at least 50
28 percent of her or his working hours (~~alone, or whose primary work~~
29 responsibility involves working without another coworker present, and
30 who is)) without a supervisor or another coworker present; and

31 (ii) Is employed by an employer as a janitor, security guard,
32 hotel or motel housekeeper, or room service attendant.

33 (c) "Employer" means any person, association, partnership,
34 property services contractor, or public or private corporation,
35 whether for-profit or not, who employs one or more persons.

36 (d) "Panic button" means an emergency contact device carried by
37 an isolated employee by which the isolated employee may summon
38 immediate on-scene assistance from another worker, a security guard,
39 or a representative of the employer.

40 A panic button must:

- 1 (i) Be designed to be carried by the isolated employee;
2 (ii) Be simple to activate without delays caused by entering
3 passwords or waiting for the system to turn on;
4 (iii) Provide an effective signal for the circumstances when
5 activated;
6 (iv) Be able to summon immediate assistance and allow responders
7 to accurately identify the isolated employee's location;
8 (v) Function reliably in all locations on all shifts and, when
9 activated, not obscure or interfere with the activation of other
10 panic buttons; and
11 (vi) Be designed to minimize inadvertent activation and be
12 resistant to disabling by an attacker.

13 (e) "Property services contractor" means any person or entity
14 that employs workers: (i) To perform labor for another person to
15 provide commercial janitorial services; or (ii) on behalf of an
16 employer to provide commercial janitorial services. "Property
17 services contractor" does not mean the employment security department
18 or individuals who perform labor under an agreement for exchanging
19 their own labor or services with each other, provided the work is
20 performed on land owned or leased by the individuals.

21 (f) "Repeat willful violator" means any employer that has been
22 the subject of a final and binding citation for a willful violation
23 of one or more requirements under this section and all applicable
24 rules, within three years of the date of issuance of the most recent
25 citation for a willful violation of one or more requirements.

26 (g) "Security guard" means an individual who is principally
27 employed as, or typically referred to as, a security officer or
28 guard, regardless of whether the individual is employed by a private
29 security company or a single employer or whether the individual is
30 required to be licensed under chapter 18.170 RCW.

31 ~~((4) (a) Hotels and motels with sixty or more rooms must meet the~~
32 ~~requirements of this section by January 1, 2020.~~

33 ~~(b) All other employers identified in subsection (1) of this~~
34 ~~section must meet the requirements of this section by January 1,~~
35 ~~2021.))~~

36 (h) "Willful" means a knowing and intentional action that is
37 neither accidental nor the result of a bona fide dispute.

38 (5) The department must adopt rules for purposes of implementing
39 and enforcing this section including, but not limited to, rules
40 concerning the collection of civil penalties and establishing the

1 processes for appeals of citations issued under this section in
2 accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 49.60.180 and 2020 c 52 s 10 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 It is an unfair practice for any employer:

6 (1) To refuse to hire any person because of age, sex, marital
7 status, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin,
8 citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or
9 military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical
10 disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a
11 person with a disability, unless based upon a bona fide occupational
12 qualification: PROVIDED, That the prohibition against discrimination
13 because of such disability shall not apply if the particular
14 disability prevents the proper performance of the particular worker
15 involved: PROVIDED, That this section shall not be construed to
16 require an employer to establish employment goals or quotas based on
17 sexual orientation.

18 (2) To discharge or bar any person from employment because of
19 age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed, color,
20 national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably
21 discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any
22 sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog
23 guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

24 (3) To discriminate against any person in compensation or in
25 other terms or conditions of employment because of age, sex, marital
26 status, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin,
27 citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or
28 military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical
29 disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a
30 person with a disability: PROVIDED, That it shall not be an unfair
31 practice for an employer to segregate washrooms or locker facilities
32 on the basis of sex, or to base other terms and conditions of
33 employment on the sex of employees where the commission by regulation
34 or ruling in a particular instance has found the employment practice
35 to be appropriate for the practical realization of equality of
36 opportunity between the sexes.

37 (4) To print, or circulate, or cause to be printed or circulated
38 any statement, advertisement, or publication, or to use any form of
39 application for employment, or to make any inquiry in connection with

1 prospective employment, which expresses any limitation,
2 specification, or discrimination as to age, sex, marital status,
3 sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship
4 or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military
5 status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical
6 disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a
7 person with a disability, or any intent to make any such limitation,
8 specification, or discrimination, unless based upon a bona fide
9 occupational qualification: PROVIDED, Nothing contained herein shall
10 prohibit advertising in a foreign language.

11 (5) To fail to provide a panic button to an isolated employee in
12 accordance with the requirements of RCW 49.60.515.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act takes effect January 1, 2026.

--- END ---