

# TOP 7 NEW WORKPLACE SAFETY LAWS CALIFORNIA HAS ADOPTED – AND KEY ACTION STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Insights  
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The California legislature has passed a slew of new workplace safety laws – many of which would change the landscape for California employers. Now that the September 30 deadline for the governor to sign or veto bills has passed, we know what new laws are coming. In addition to legislation just signed in law, the Cal/OSHA Standards Board – the agency tasked with developing workplace safe standards – has adopted a broad array of new safety rules. Here is a summary of the top workplace safety legislation and agency rulemaking – and what you’ll need to do to prepare. (NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, these bills will take effect January 1, 2025.)

*This Insight was co-authored by Law Clerk [Luke Bambrick](#) (Los Angeles).*

## 1. Workplace Violence Prevention Law

In the prior legislative session, California passed SB 553 requiring that employers create and implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP) and conduct employee training by July 1, 2024. Developing and implementing the WVPP has been a significant undertaking for employers, as the law requires comprehensive multi-prong procedures including identifying and evaluating unsafe conditions in the workplace, and reporting, responding to, and investigating workplace violence incidents. [Read a summary of this rule and what you should do about it here.](#)

## 2. Rulemaking Agency Adopts Indoor Heat Standard

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**Andrew J. Sommer**

Partner

[213.330.4487](tel:213.330.4487)

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The Cal/OSHA Standards Board has adopted an indoor heat prevention rule applicable to indoor work areas where the temperature reaches 82 degrees Fahrenheit. The rule took effect July 23, 2024. The rule poses significant challenges for California employers, particularly those operating in warehouses, distribution centers, hangars and manufacturing plants where indoor temperatures may be difficult to control. [Read a summary of this rule and what you should do about it here.](#)

### 3. First Aid Kits to Include Narcan

California seeks to address the opioid crisis with a new bill, AB 1976, requiring employers to stock naloxone hydrochloride (Narcan) — a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses — in their first aid kits. By December 1, 2027, the Division of Occupational Safety and Health must propose a regulation mandating that employers include Narcan or other FDA-approved opioid antagonists, along with usage instructions, in workplace first aid supplies. The bill also explicitly provides legal protections to Good Samaritans who administer these medications during suspected overdose emergencies, shielding them from civil liability except in cases of gross negligence or willful misconduct. The Cal/OSHA Standards Board must consider a resulting standard for adoption by December 1, 2028.

### 4. Weapon Detection Devices for Hospitals

California will mandate that hospitals utilize weapons detection devices at designated entrances, supervised by trained personnel not involved in patient care. Specifically, AB 2975 directs the Cal/OSHA Standards Board to revise current standards by March 1, 2027, to incorporate this weapons screening requirement. The screening devices must be positioned at the main public entrance, the emergency department entrance, and any labor and delivery entrances that are separately accessible to the public. For small and rural hospitals, as well as those facing space constraints or which are federally certified as long-term care hospitals or inpatient rehabilitation facilities, a handheld metal detector wand will meet this requirement.

### 5. Workplace Protections Apply to Certain Household Workers

California has enacted a new law (SB 1350) expanding workplace protections under the California Occupational

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Safety and Health Act to household domestic workers. Beginning July 1, 2025, domestic workers performing household tasks on a permanent or temporary basis will fall under the state's occupational health and safety standards. Notably, however, the law's impact is limited as it excludes domestic service workers directly employed by private individuals, in their own residences, to perform "ordinary domestic household tasks" such as housecleaning, cooking, and caregiving, and those working under publicly funded programs or in family daycare homes.

## **6. Process Safety Management Standards Extended to Biofuel Refineries**

The California Refinery and Chemical Plant Worker Safety Act of 1990 currently mandates that the Cal/OSHA Standards Board adopt process safety management standards for refineries, chemical plants, and certain other manufacturing facilities. However, the existing law focuses specifically on petroleum refineries. Apparently motivated by recent incidents at California biofuel refineries, AB 3258 expands the law's reach to refineries that produce biofuel, as well as asphalt and petrochemical feedstock.

## **7. Rulemaking Agency Amends Lead Standards**

The Cal/OSHA Standard Board has adopted amendments to the lead standards that are applicable to construction and non-construction worksites. The rule amendments drastically lower the permissible exposure limit (PEL) as well as the action level (AL) triggering an obligation to conduct exposure monitoring. In construction, certain tasks have been designated "trigger tasks" when lead is present, which until an exposure assessment is completed, are presumed to be above the PEL and require interim protections. Based on the lowering of these exposure thresholds, many more industries now fall under the lead standards.

## **Safety Proposals Vetoed by the Governor**

But this year there were major vetoes of workplace safety legislation that would have dramatically impacted California employers. The two biggest proposals that fell short:

- **Farmworkers' Heat Injuries Would Have Been Presumed to be Work-Related**

Agricultural employers in California can breathe a sigh of relief after Governor Newsom vetoed a workers' compensation bill that would have severely punished employers who don't comply with heat standards. The proposed law contained in SB 1299 would have created a presumption that heat-related injuries sustained by farmworkers were work-related and thus covered by workers' compensation if their employer failed to comply with heat illness prevention standards.

#### ■ [Governor Vetoes Controversial AI Safety Law](#)

Facing intense opposition from high-tech businesses and leaders, the Governor vetoed a proposed AI safety law that would have required developers of high-risk AI models to conduct safety tests and implement shutdown mechanisms to prevent critical harms. SB 1047, also known as the "Safe and Secure Innovation for Frontier Artificial Intelligence Models Act," would have set the most stringent set of AI safety standards in the country, particularly when it comes to cybersecurity and public safety. [You can read all about it here and what to expect next.](#)

#### **Conclusion**

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