

# SAFETYMATTERS

safety and loss control resource



**Heat Illness Awareness / Hazard Communication  
Hazardous Waste Handling  
Workplace Bullying Prevention / SB-553 / Ladder Safety**

# WORKPLACE HEAT AWARENESS: Stay Cool, Stay Safe











As temperatures rise, it's crucial for workplaces to recognize and mitigate the risks associated with heat exposure. Heat-related illnesses can affect anyone, but workers in outdoor environments or hot indoor settings are particularly vulnerable.

## Understanding the Risks



Heat stress can lead to serious health issues, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), symptoms of heat-related illnesses include:

- **Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating, dizziness, weakness, nausea, and headache.
- **Heat Stroke:** High body temperature (103°F or higher), confusion, rapid pulse, and loss of consciousness.

Heat Exhaustion		Heat Stroke
 <p><b>Dizziness</b></p>  <p><b>Nausea</b></p>  <p><b>Weakness</b></p>		 <p><b>Confusion</b></p>  <p><b>Throbbing headache</b></p>  <p><b>Unconsciousness</b></p>
	<p>Drink water, move to cooler, air-conditioned, or shaded space</p>	<p><b>CALL 911</b>, loosen or dampen clothing, use cool compress on forehead and neck</p>

# Protect Yourself Against Heat Exposure

## You are at risk if you:

Are new to the job  Work in hot and humid conditions  Do heavy physical labor

### Dress Appropriately

Wear clothes that are:

- \* Light-colored (white, etc.)
- \* Loose-fitting
- \* Light weight



If you need to wear protective clothing or personal protective equipment, like impermeable clothing, you may need more frequent breaks for water, rest, and shade.

### Drink Water & Take Breaks



- \* Take frequent breaks out of the sun
- \* Drink 1 cup (8 ounces) of water every 15-20 minutes
- \* **DO NOT** wait until you are thirsty to drink water
- \* **DO NOT** drink alcohol and **AVOID** caffeine.

### Know the Warning Signs

#### Heat Exhaustion:

- \* Weakness
- \* Wet Skin
- \* Headache
- \* Dizziness
- \* Fainting
- \* Vomiting

#### Heat Stroke:

- \* Red, hot, dry skin
- \* Confusion
- \* Excessive Sweating
- \* Convulsions/Seizures

### Seek Medical Assistance

#### **Heat Stroke is a medical emergency**

Look out for your co-workers. If you see the warning signs take action!

**Call 911**

Getting help can be the difference between **life** and **death**.

Learn more about heat-related illnesses and how to prevent them at :

[www.osha.gov/heat](http://www.osha.gov/heat)

# Why Hazard Communication Matters

Hazard Communication (HazCom) gives employees the "**right to know**" and the "**right to understand**" about the hazardous chemicals they work with.

## Employee Responsibilities:

- Know what chemicals you're working with.
- Use proper PPE and follow safe work practices.
- Report damaged labels or missing SDSs immediately.
- Read labels and SDSs before use.
- Participate in all required training.



## Key Components of the HazCom Program:

1. **Chemical Inventory** Each County department must maintain a current list of all hazardous chemicals used or stored in the workplace.
2. **Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)** An SDS provides detailed information about a chemical, including its physical and health hazards, protective measures, and emergency response procedures.
3. **Labeling and Warning Systems** Every hazardous chemical container must be properly labeled with the product identifier, signal word, hazard statements, precautionary statements, and pictograms in line with the Globally Harmonized System (GHS). Never remove or deface a chemical label.
4. **Employee Training** All employees who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals must receive training at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new chemical hazard is introduced. Training must cover:
  - \* Reading and interpreting labels and SDSs
  - \* Safe handling, use, and storage of hazardous chemicals
  - \* Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - \* Emergency procedures and spill response

# Stay Safe: Proper Handling of Hazardous Waste

## What is Hazardous Waste?

Hazardous waste includes materials that are flammable, toxic, corrosive, or reactive. Examples include used solvents, chemical containers, batteries, contaminated medical supplies, and certain industrial by-products.

## Safety Best Practices

- \* Know the Types: Understand which materials in your area are considered hazardous and how they must be handled.
- \* Proper Containers: Use containers specifically designed for hazardous waste, and ensure they are labeled and sealed correctly.
- \* PPE is a Must: Always wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves, goggles, aprons, or respirators, when handling hazardous materials.
- \* Spill Response: Be trained in the procedures for cleaning up hazardous waste spills safely and promptly. Have spill kits accessible in your area.
- \* Segregation: Never mix incompatible hazardous wastes (for example, acids with bases) to avoid dangerous reactions.

## Labeling and Storage

All hazardous waste must be clearly labeled with its contents and hazard type. Store containers in designated areas away from high-traffic zones and secure them to prevent tipping.

## Disposal Procedures

Never dispose of hazardous waste in regular trash bins or pour it down drains. Follow your organization's disposal protocols and coordinate with certified hazardous waste disposal contractors.

**CAUTION**



**BIOHAZARD**

# What Is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behavior directed toward an employee (or group of employees) that creates a risk to health and safety. It can include:

- Verbal abuse or belittling remarks
- Intimidation or threats
- Undermining someone's work deliberately
- Exclusion from meetings or information
- Spreading rumors or gossip



**Note: One-off incidents may still be serious and should not be ignored.**



STOP  
BULLYING

Departments can prevent workplace bullying through a combination of policies, education, and accountability. Here are five essential strategies:

## 1. Establish Clear Policies

Employees should be made aware of these policies through orientation programs and regular updates.

## 2. Foster a Respectful Work Culture

Leaders and managers play a crucial role in shaping workplace culture. Promoting open communication, encouraging diversity, and fostering an atmosphere of collaboration can help prevent bullying.

## 3. Provide Training and Education

Regular training sessions on workplace bullying prevention help employees recognize problematic behaviors and understand how to address them.

#### 4. Encourage Open Communication and Reporting

Departments must create safe and accessible avenues for employees to report bullying without fear of retaliation. Offering anonymous reporting tools and establishing HR-led investigations ensure that complaints are taken seriously.

#### 5. Take Swift Action Against Bullying

When bullying incidents arise, management must act promptly and fairly. Investigations should be conducted thoroughly, and appropriate disciplinary actions should be taken based on company policies. Additionally, support should be provided to victims to help them recover from workplace harassment.

#### What You Can Do:

**Speak up:** If you feel safe, let the person know their behavior is not acceptable.

**Report it:** Contact your supervisor or HR. You may also submit concerns anonymously.

**Support others:** If you witness bullying, don't ignore it—be an ally.

**Know your resources:** Utilize the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support.

*Together, we can build a workplace where everyone feels valued and safe.*

To support workplace bullying prevention strategies, here are some credible references:

1. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) – Provides guidelines on workplace harassment and discrimination prevention. [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

2. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – Offers resources on workplace safety and employee rights. [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

3. Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) – Research and advocacy on workplace bullying prevention [www.workplacebullying.org](http://www.workplacebullying.org)



# Understanding California Senate Bill 553: Enhancing Workplace Safety

Effective July 1, 2024, California's Senate Bill 553 (SB 553) mandates that most employers implement comprehensive measures to prevent workplace violence. This legislation underscores the state's commitment to ensuring safe working environments across various industries.

## What Is SB 553?

SB 553 requires California employers to establish, implement, and maintain a written Workplace Violence Prevention Plan (WVPP). This plan can be a standalone document or integrated into an existing Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP). The law applies broadly to employers, employees, places of employment, and employer-provided housing, with specific exemptions for certain sectors and remote workers .

## Key Requirements for Employers

- 1. Develop a Written WVPP:** Employers must create a plan tailored to each worksite, identifying responsible individuals, procedures for hazard assessments, and protocols for responding to incidents.
- 2. Employee Involvement:** The plan should detail methods for obtaining active employee participation in its development and implementation.
- 3. Reporting and Response Procedures:** Establish clear procedures for employees to report workplace violence incidents without fear of retaliation, and outline the employer's response mechanisms .
- 4. Training:** Provide effective training to employees on the WVPP, including recognizing and responding to workplace violence hazards. Training must be accessible and appropriate to the employees' educational level, literacy, and language .
- 5. Recordkeeping:** Maintain records of workplace violence hazard identification, evaluations, corrections, training, and incident investigations for specified periods .

# Types of Workplace Violence Addressed

## **SB 553 categorizes workplace violence into four types:**

**Type 1:** Violence committed by individuals with no legitimate business at the worksite, such as robbers.

**Type 2:** Violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, students, or visitors.

**Type 3:** Violence against an employee by a current or former employee.

**Type 4:** Violence committed in the workplace by someone who has a personal relationship with an employee.

## **Compliance and Enforcement**

Employers must ensure their WVPP is specific to each work area and operation.

Cal/OSHA is responsible for enforcing SB 553 and may issue citations and penalties for non-compliance. Employers are encouraged to utilize resources such as Cal/OSHA's model WVPP to aid in compliance .

## **Next Steps for Employers**

- Review and Update Policies: Assess current workplace safety policies and update them to meet SB 553 requirements.
- Develop or Revise WVPP: Create or modify the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan to align with the new standards.
- Train Employees: Implement training programs to educate employees about the WVPP and procedures for handling workplace violence.
- Maintain Records: Establish systems for documenting training sessions, incident reports, and hazard assessments.

**By proactively addressing these requirements, employers can foster a safer work environment and ensure compliance with California's enhanced workplace safety regulations.**

# Ladder Safety

## Workplace Safety



### Choosing the Right Ladder

- **Height:** The ladder should reach your working area without requiring you to stand on the top rung.
- **Weight Capacity:** Choose a ladder that can support both your weight and any tools or materials you're carrying.
- **Type:** Use fiberglass ladders near electrical work to avoid shock risks.

### Always inspect your ladder before use.

#### **Look for:**

- Cracks, rust, or bent parts
- Loose rungs or steps
- Worn or missing feet
- Damaged locking mechanisms

***If a ladder shows any signs of damage, tag it out and remove it from service until it can be repaired or replaced.***

### Safe Setup

- Place the ladder on a stable, level surface.
- Use the 4-to-1 rule: for every 4 feet of height, position the base 1 foot away from the wall.
- Ensure the ladder is fully open and locked in place.
- Keep the area around the base of the ladder clear of tools, cords, and debris.
- Do not stand on the top two rungs of a stepladder or the top three rungs of an extension ladder.

### Climbing and Working Safely

- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand).
- Do not carry tools in your hands while climbing—use a tool belt or hoist.
- Never overreach. Keep your belt buckle between the rails.
- Do not stand on the top two rungs of a stepladder or the top three rungs of an extension ladder.

