

## **Employee Safety Devices – Legislative Roundup**

*Updated November 1, 2022*

An employee safety device (ESD) allows employees to communicate with employers (and sometimes even emergency services). An app or service requires wireless connectivity, while devices are usually Bluetooth enabled. A basic emergency signaling tool may only include a panic button, while more advanced tools may offer a complete suite of software like clock-in and clock-out features. The goal of these devices is to equip employees with safety devices to help protect them while working to avoid agitators whether from guest, coworkers, etc.

In 2018, AHLA announced the [5-Star Promise](#), a voluntary commitment by AHLA members to enhance policies, trainings and resources, including ESDs, that together are aimed and strengthening safety and security for hotel employees and guests. Included in that promise was to “ensure America’s hotels are safe places for all those who work in and visit them.” The initiative began with 17 companies and expanded to over 50 companies that have made it a priority to provide ESDs to their associates.

Federally there are no laws put in place to ensure that ESDs are given to employees at hotel properties. In recent years, several states and local governments have enacted legislation to mandate ESDs for hotel employees. This list includes:

### **Seattle**

- In November 2016, Seattle residents approved the [Seattle’s Hotel Employees Health and Safety \(HEHS\) Initiative](#), which requires hotel employers to provide employees, who provide in-room services (regardless of their position), with an ESD. The ordinance went into effect on November 30, 2016.

### **Chicago**

- In October 2017, Chicago City Council enacted the [Hands Off Pants On Ordinance](#) which requires hotel employers to equip employees “who clean, inventory, inspect, or restock supplies in a guest room or restroom, under circumstances where no other hotel staff is present in such room” with a panic button or notification device. The ordinance went into effect on July 1, 2018.

### **Sacramento County**

- In February 2018, Sacramento County’s Board of Supervisors enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#) requiring hotel employers with 25 or more guest rooms located in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County to provide employees with a panic button or notification device. The ordinance went into effect on March 29, 2018; however, the County provided a 60-day grace period for businesses to comply with the ordinance after it went into effect.

### **Miami Beach**

- In July 2018, Miami Beach City Council enacted the [Protection of Hotel Employees from Assault and Sexual Harrassment Ordinance](#) specifically mandating ESDs for hotel and hostel employees. The ordinance requires hotel employers to provide room attendants, housekeeping attendants, minibar attendants, or room service services, with ESDs. The ordinance went into effect on August 1, 2019.

### **Long Beach**

- In November 2018, Long Beach residents approved [Measure WW](#), which required hotel employers with 50 or more guest rooms to, among other provisions, provide employees who work in guest rooms without other employees present, with an electronic contract device. One week later, Long Beach City Council enacted its own [Hotel Worker Safety Precautions Ordinance](#), requiring all hotel employers to provide panic buttons to all employees who work in a guest room without other employees present. The ordinance went into effect on December 15, 2018.

### **Oakland**

- In November 2018, Oakland residents approved “[Measure Z](#),” which imposed new minimum wages and employment standards for some hotel workers, including the use of ESDs. The measure requires hotel employers to provide a personal security device to each hotel worker assigned to work alone in a guest room or restroom facility. The ordinance went into effect on December 23, 2018. The hotel employee minimum wage requirement went into effect on July 1, 2019.

### **Washington**

- In May 2019, Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed [S.B. 5258](#) into law requiring hotel and motel employers, among other types of businesses, to provide panic buttons to all employees who “spend the majority of their working hours alone”. This can include, but is not limited to, a hotel or motel housekeeper or room service attendant. The ordinance went into effect on July 28, 2019, however, hotels and motels with 60 or more guest rooms had until January 1, 2020 to comply. All other affected employers had until January 1, 2021.

### **New Jersey**

- In June 2019, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed [S. 2986](#) into law requiring all hotel employers with 100 or more guest rooms to provide employees with a Bluetooth “panic button”. The employer may not charge the employee for the safety device, and failure to abide by the law could subject result in a \$5,000 fine for the first violation, and a \$10,000 fine for each subsequent violation. The ordinance went into effect on December 1, 2019.

### **Santa Monica**

- In August 2019, Santa Monica City Council enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#), which, among other provisions, requires all hotel employers to provide employees with ESDs, at no cost, regardless of the hotel’s size. The ordinance went into effect on January 1,

2020, with the exception of the Hotel Worker Retention provision, which became effective immediately.

### **Illinois**

- In August 2019, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker signed [S.B. 75, the Hotel Casino Employee Safety Act](#), into law requiring hotel employers with over 100 guest rooms to provide part- and full-time employees with wireless workplace panic buttons. The ordinance went into effect on July 1, 2020, but hotels were granted an extension until March 1, 2021, to comply.

### **Sacramento**

- In January 2020, Sacramento City Council enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#), which, among other provisions, required hotel employers to provide a panic button to each employee who is assigned to work in a guest room or restroom. The ordinance went into effect on July 14, 2020.

### **West Hollywood**

- In August 2021, West Hollywood City Council enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#), which among other provisions, requires hotel employers to provide a personal security device to each hotel worker assigned to work in a guest room or restroom facility where other hotel workers are not present. The personal security device shall be provided at no cost to the hotel employee. The ordinance went into effect on September 7, 2021; however, employers were given until January 1, 2022 to comply with the ESD requirement.

### **Glendale**

- In June 2022, Glendale City Council enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#), which among other provisions, required hotel employers to provide employees with personal security devices at no cost and trained them how to use it. The ordinance took effect on July 28, 2022.

### **Los Angeles**

- In July 2022, Los Angeles City Council enacted the [Hotel Worker Protection Ordinance](#), which among other provisions, requires hotel employers to provide a personal security device to each employee assigned to work in a guest room or restroom facility whether other hotel workers are not assigned to be present. The personal security device shall be provided at no cost to the hotel worker and shall be maintained in good working order by the hotel employer. The ordinance went into effect on August 12, 2022.