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Steve Koretoff & Flory Industries Named 2024 Almond Alliance Members of the Year

The Almond Alliance recognized an exceptional business and individual as its 2023/2024 Members of the Year. Pg. 10

Hive Theft Peaked in 2023, and Now 2024 has Surpassed That!

California is home to the largest pollination event in the world - almonds. Like one third of all the food we eat, almonds are dependent on honey bees for pollination, and honey bees must be used to achieve maximum yields. Pg. 20

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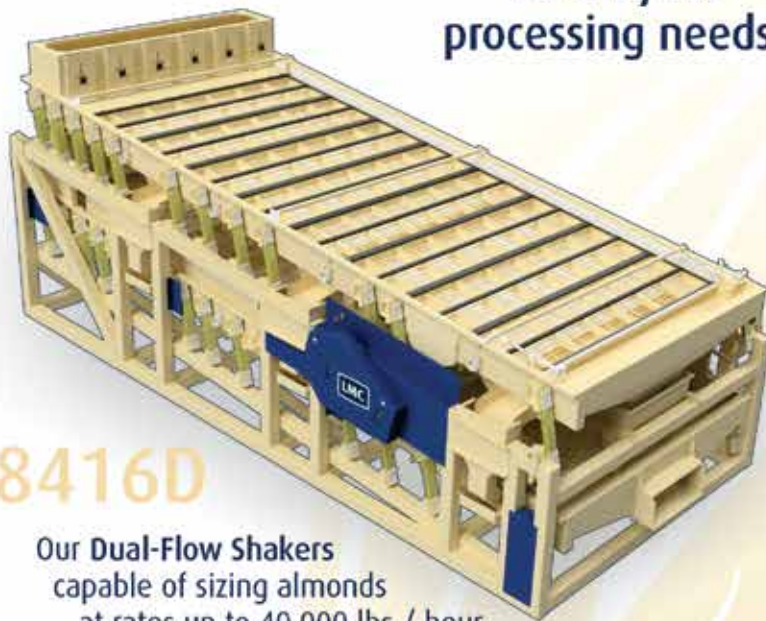
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A GRATEFUL FAREWELL

By: Aubrey Bettencourt, President & CEO

It is with a profound sense of gratitude that I look back on nearly three years of service with the Almond Alliance. It has been a great honor and privilege to represent and work within an industry I am deeply passionate about. From the outset, my goal has always been clear: to be purposeful in my endeavors and to do everything in my power to keep farmer farming.

Reflecting on my tenure, I recognize the importance of knowing one's limitations and when it is time to pass the baton. When I was recruited for this position, I made it clear that I understood the life cycle of leadership—that there comes a point when a new vision is needed to propel an organization forward. I firmly believe that a good leader should be able to articulate a vision, execute on it, and then gracefully step aside when the time is right.

Over the course of my time with the Alliance, we have achieved significant milestones and laid a solid foundation for future growth and success. However, I am acutely aware that there is still much work to be done, and it is time for the organization to take the next step in its journey. I am excited to see who will step into the role of leadership and bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the table. It is essential for the continued dominance of our industry that we embrace change and innovation.

In a recent conversation with members of the industry, we discussed the importance of ushering in a new generation of leaders and embracing diverse perspectives. In agriculture, as in any field, stagnation is not an option. We must be willing to adapt, evolve, and embrace new ideas if we are to thrive in an ever-changing landscape.

In handing over the reins, I am filled with optimism about the future of the Almond Alliance and agriculture in general. There is no end to this transition, but rather a new beginning and the opportunity to chart a course for continued growth and prosperity.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the members of the Almond Alliance, our partners, and stakeholders for their unwavering support and dedication. The opportunity to serve alongside you has been a privilege, and I am confident that together we will continue to advance the interests of our industry.



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NEW CHAPTER IN THE ALMOND ALLIANCE'S LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

By: Blake Vann, Almond Alliance Chair

We are embarking on a new chapter at the Almond Alliance as we bid farewell to Aubrey Bettencourt after nearly three years of her tenure as the President and CEO of the Alliance.

Under Aubrey's guidance, the Almond Alliance has flourished into a formidable force, championing for the almond industry in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. Aubrey's dedication and vision have propelled the Alliance forward, setting a strong foundation for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Her departure does not diminish our strength. The Alliance assures its members and stakeholders that our exceptional team remains intact and fully engaged. We continue to actively address top-priority issues, ensuring that the voice of the almond industry remains robust and influential.

We take great pride in our team, whose expertise and commitment drive our success. From navigating supply chain disruptions to addressing market challenges, our team stands ready to tackle whatever comes our way. With dedicated members and volunteers actively involved in various committees, we are poised to continue our mission of advancing the interests of almond growers, processors, and handlers.

Looking ahead, we recognize the importance of selecting the right leader to steer the organization forward, a search committee has been formed to identify a CEO who aligns with the Alliance's vision and values. Taking the time to find the ideal candidate ensures continuity and ensures that the Alliance remains at the forefront of industry advocacy and leadership.

As the search for a new CEO unfolds, the Almond Alliance remains steadfast in its commitment to its core objectives, prioritizing issues that have the most significant impact on its members. By staying true to its values of transparency, collaboration, and strategic focus, the Alliance is unwavering in its dedication to delivering value to its members and driving positive change in the almond industry.

The Almond Alliance invites all stakeholders to join in this journey of transition and growth, confident in the organization's ability to navigate the challenges ahead and emerge stronger than ever. We will continue to share more updates on our search for a new CEO as more information becomes available.

If you have any questions about the CEO search or are interested in the work the Alliance is doing, please feel free to reach out to me or other board members.

I invite you to join us for the 2nd Annual Almond PAC Golf Tournament, a fantastic opportunity to support our efforts while enjoying a day of golf, networking, and camaraderie with industry leaders and peers. Your participation helps advance our mission and strengthen our community. The Almond PAC amplifies our collective voice in the political arena, supporting candidates who value and understand the almond industry. Contribute to the Almond PAC today and help us make our voice louder, stronger, and more effective. For more information visit almondalliance.org or contact Annie Romero at aromero@almondalliance.org




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STEVE KORETOFF & FLORY INDUSTRIES NAMED 2024 ALMOND ALLIANCE MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

The Almond Alliance recognized an exceptional business and individual as its 2023/2024 Members of the Year.

Flory Industries has been an integral part of Central California agriculture since 1936 and has been selected as the *Associate Member of the Year*. Flory Industries' expertise and support of almond industry advocacy have reinforced the company's position as an essential contributor to the industry's growth and success.

"Flory Industries' deep roots in Central California agriculture and their commitment to innovation have made them a vital partner in the almond industry," said Aubrey Bettencourt, outgoing President and CEO of the Almond Alliance. "Their increased activity within the Almond Alliance has amplified advocacy efforts and strengthened the industry's voice."

In recognition of his contributions to the almond industry and the Alliance, Steve Koretoff was awarded the Member of the Year. Grower, processor, and handler Koretoff marks the second generation at Purity Organics and has completed his second term as Secretary of the Almond Alliance. Through his dedication and strong moral character, he has contributed calm wisdom to the leadership of the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, the Grower Committee, and the greater almond community.

"Steve embodies the essence of excellence in our almond community," Bettencourt said. "His unwavering commitment to the industry and remarkable leadership as Secretary of the Almond Alliance has not only earned him this prestigious honor but has also left an indelible mark on our collective journey."



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ACCEPTING MOTHER NATURE'S GIFTS SHOULD BE A BURDEN

After a third year of drought, Mother Nature came to California's rescue with storm after storm and replenished our drought-stricken state in 2023. This year, she seems to be doing it again. That's the good news. But here's the bad news: in the Sacramento Delta, California's central water system, 95 percent of that water is once again lost and flowing into the ocean.

Our state goes through drought cycles every 4-6 years, followed by wet years. It's the nature of where we live.

With all the smart people, technology, and money we have in California, we should prepare for the next rainfall while building water storage for the future.

Did you know that the State of California does not recognize active groundwater recharge as a beneficial water use? This bureaucratic oversight means that floodwaters cannot be directed purposefully to replenish aquifers without obtaining a special permit—a process that can be time-consuming and if granted, the rain might have already stopped.

In our industry, over 55 percent of the land that grows California almonds has been identified as having “active recharge” potential. What if we added the land under other commodities and cities to our 825,000 acres? Can you imagine how much water we could store?

Let's sink those flood waters so that water flows naturally into the aquifers for community wells to prevent subsidence and stored for later use.

Sinking flood water in existing “active recharge” land doesn't need new construction designs, and there is no additional cost to taxpayers. But it requires updating California's water policy.

Everyone would benefit by making these simple changes – farmers, rural communities, disadvantaged populations, and the environment.

California has the potential to harness Mother Nature's gifts for the greater good, and it is time we take proactive steps to ensure that her generosity benefits all. By updating our water policies, we can transform floods into opportunities, safeguard our vital resources, and create a sustainable future for generations to come.

The Almond Alliance is ready to work with the Governor's Administration on short-term and long-term water policies that benefit the environment, people, and food producers.



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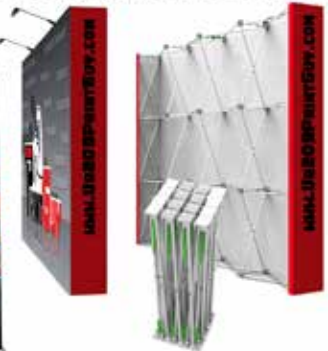
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The Report

Winton-Ireland, Strom & Green Insurance Agency

Almond Alliance Edition

Navigating Workplace Violence Requirements in California

SB 533 signed in 2023 and plan is required by July 1, 2024

Starting July 1, 2024, a new California law requires employers to establish, implement & maintain a written plan and provide annual training on workplace violence prevention. Senate Bill 553, also requires employers to record and maintain a log of any violent workplace incidents.



The Prevention Plan must include:

- ✓ Prohibiting Workplace Violence.
- ✓ Acknowledging and responding to reports of violence.
- ✓ Employee training and communication.
- ✓ Emergency response plan.
- ✓ Workplace hazard assessments.
- ✓ Other requirements, such as maintaining a log "Violent Incident".

Ag Hazard Assessments

Workplace Hazards need to be identified when developing your Plan!

The Agriculture workplace violence prevention program should include a thorough assessment of all job sites to identify potential risks and hazards.

Assessment may include:

- ✓ Hours of operation.
- ✓ Opening and closing warehouse, office, shops and other premises.
- ✓ Lighting of Parking Area or Fields.
- ✓ Vendors checking-in the main office.
- ✓ Working alone.
- ✓ Exchanging Money.
- ✓ Exit Routes.
- ✓ Selling Produce and Veggies to public (Fruit Stand and Markets).

Inside this issue...

Plan is required by July 1, 2024

Ag Hazard Assessments

How to Implement

Employee Training/Recordkeeping



Jeremy Benjamin



Brandon Olesen

How to Implement

Effectively Communicating to Employees



Implementing an effective training procedure is critical in mitigating workplace violence. Educating employees to identify warning signs, manage conflicts, and foster a non-violent culture empowers individuals to respond effectively. Training sessions are required.

All education and training material must be evaluated in terms of employee comprehension, quality of learning, change in practice or behaviors, and organizational performance.

Employee Training/Recordkeeping

Effectively Train Personnel and Record Maintenance



Training

All employees, including managers and supervisors, will receive job-specific training on preventing and responding to workplace violence. Additional training must be provided when new or unrecognized hazards are identified, or when changes are made and annually thereafter.

Training must include:

- ✓ Describe all workplace violence hazards which are job-specific; corrective actions the employer has implemented; available assistance to prevent or respond to violence; and strategies to avoid physical harm.
- ✓ Workplace violence incidents reporting procedures (to employer or law enforcement) without fear of punishment.
- ✓ Describe and explain the workplace incident log and how to obtain copies of records.

Recordkeeping

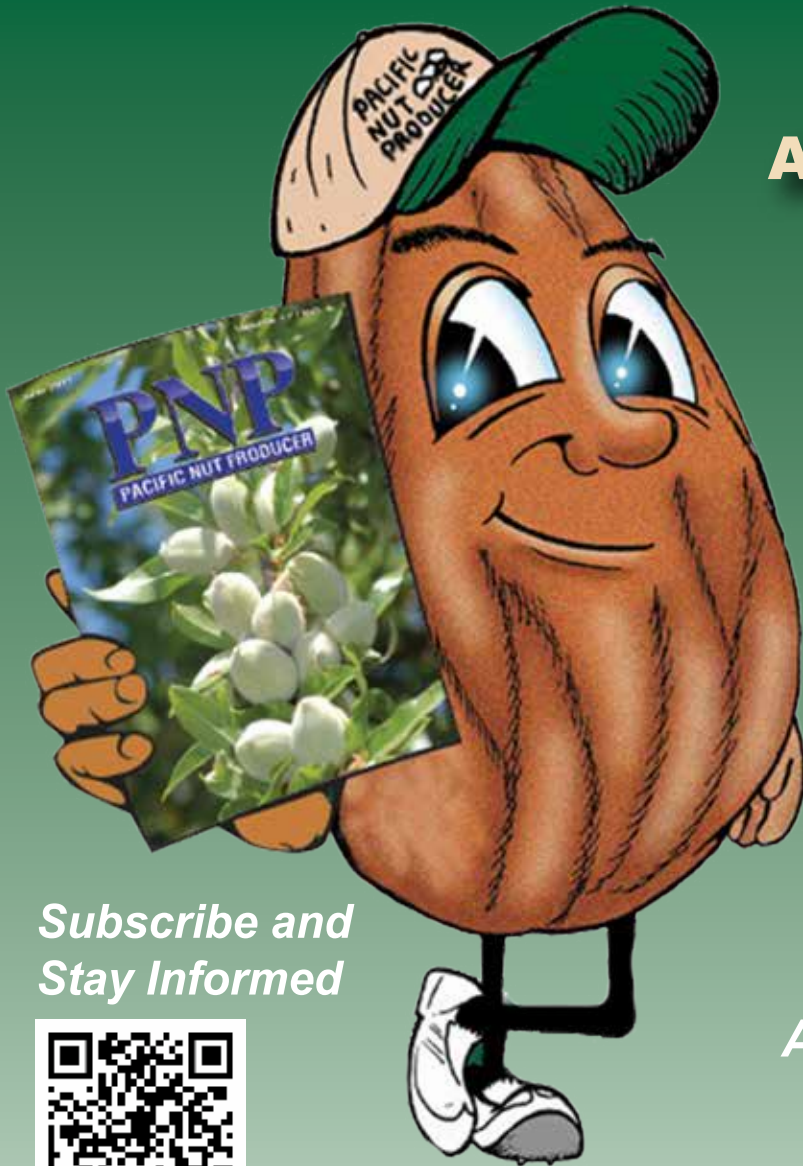
Recordkeeping must include a detailed incident log, inspection reports, and investigation and training records.

- ✓ The written plan must be easily accessible to employees, authorized employee representatives, and Cal/OSHA representatives.
- ✓ The following must be created and maintained for a minimum of five years:
 - Hazard Identifications
 - Evaluations
 - Logs
 - Investigations
 - Corrective Action
- ✓ Training records must be maintained a minimum of one year.



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HIVE THEFT PEAKED IN 2023, AND NOW 2024 HAS SURPASSED THAT!

By: Deputy Rowdy J. Freeman

Commercial Beekeeper, CSBA Member, Butte County Sheriff's Office, and Past President of the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force

California is home to the largest pollination event in the world - almonds. Like one third of all the food we eat, almonds are dependent on honey bees for pollination, and honey bees must be used to achieve maximum yields.

Almonds from California are shipped all over the world for everyone to enjoy. California is home to approximately 840,000 native honey bee colonies. But, it takes approximately 2.4 million hives to complete the monumental task of meeting California's pollination needs. This means over 1.5 million hives are trucked into California from all over the United States, coming as far away as Florida.

Almonds are dependent on honey bees, and commercial honey bees are dependent on almonds. Many beekeepers rely on the income from almond pollination to sustain their commercial beekeeping operations. The average cost to rent beehives for almond pollination ranges from \$200-\$225 each. There is a fair amount to be made on almond pollination. Most commercial beekeepers depend on this income to help pay to keep their honey bees healthy and fed throughout the year.

Money is the root of all evil and criminals are always looking for a way to make a quick buck. The commercial beekeeping industry has fallen victim to this and has seen an 86 percent increase in hive theft between 2013 and 2024. Most of this is associated with almond pollination.

Over this time frame, nearly 10,000 honeybee hives have been stolen with an estimated value of \$3.5 million. The estimated financial losses to the commercial beekeeping industry are 60% greater bringing the total loss for beekeepers to \$5.6 million.

2023 saw the highest number of hive thefts in a single year with some 2,300 hives reported as stolen. As the 2024 almond pollination event begins, so do the thefts. Two separate thefts of 120 hives each, two Hummerbee forklifts and a trailer were stolen by thieves in the central valley in Fresno County to start off the thefts for 2024. These incidents, and the number of hives stolen were expected to increase as they normally do, and they did. So far in 2024 there has been approximately 2,700 hives stolen in California surrounding almond pollination, making 2024 now the largest number of thefts in a single year. The 2024 estimated losses to the industry and the economy is approximately 2.7 million dollars.

Honeybees have been declared the most important living beings on earth, and most people alive today recognize their vital importance to the survival of all life.

Many agencies and organizations throughout California have been diligently working together to fight the issues surrounding hive thefts. A special California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force has been appointed to investigate and work to prevent beehive theft. This effort is supported by the California State Beekeepers Association, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the State Apiary Board, the California Farm Bureau, local county Agriculture Departments, local Sheriff's Offices, and the Almond Board of California.

For more information on how you can help prevent hive theft, please see the CSBA (California State Beekeepers Association) Guide to Preventing Hive Theft on their website. Download it and share with other beekeepers as well as farmers and neighbors in areas where you place your hives. We're all in this together when it comes to fighting this crime that drastically affects the commercial beekeeping and almond industries. If you have any information related to any recent, or past hive thefts please contact Deputy Rowdy Freeman, the CSBA or the California Almond Alliance.



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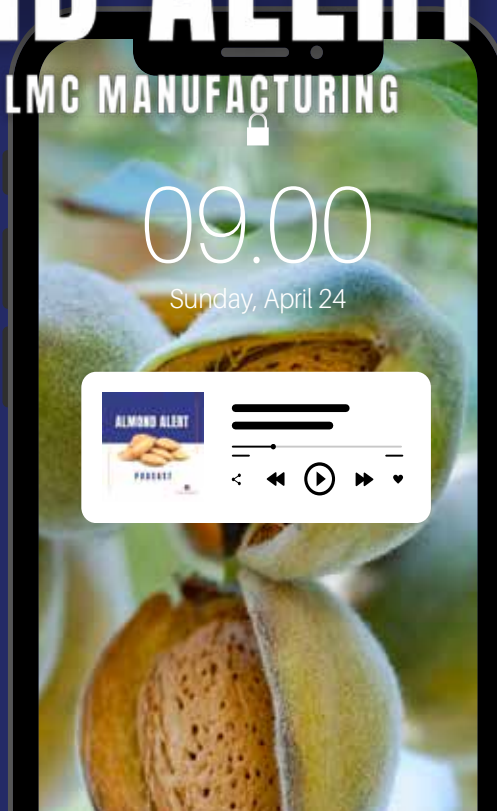
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NEW WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION REQUIREMENTS STARTING JULY 1, 2024

By: Stacy Henderson, Henderson Hatfield, A Professional Company

Starting July 1, 2024, most California employers must comply with new requirements for preventing and addressing workplace violence. This article contains a general overview of the new requirements. Employers should work with an expert safety consultant or employment law counsel to ensure they are in compliance by and after July 1, 2024.

1. Written Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

(“WVPP”) - As part of the employer’s Injury and Illness Prevention Program, or as a separate WVPP, employers must establish, implement and maintain an effective WVPP with the contents set forth in California Labor Code §6401.9, including:

- a. Names or job titles of the persons responsible for implementing the WVPP, with roles clearly described if there are multiple people responsible for the WVPP.
- b. Effective procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees and authorized representatives in developing and implementing the WVPP, including, but not limited to, through their participation in identifying, evaluating and correcting workplace violence hazards, in designing and implementing training, and in reporting and investigating workplace violence incidents.
- c. Methods the employer will use to coordinate implementation of the WVPP with other employers, when applicable, to ensure that those employers and employees understand their respective roles, as provided in the WVPP. The methods shall ensure that all employees receive proper training and that workplace violence incidents involving employees are reported, investigated and recorded.
- d. Effective procedures for the employer to accept and respond to reports of workplace violence, and to prohibit retaliation against an employee who makes such a report.
- e. Effective procedures to ensure that supervisory and nonsupervisory employees comply with the WVPP in the required manner.
- f. Effective procedures to communicate with employees regarding workplace violence matters, including, but not limited to, how an employee can report a violent incident, threat or other workplace violence concern to the employer or law enforcement, without fear of reprisal, how employee concerns will be investigated and how employees will be informed of the results of the investigation and any corrective action being taken.
- g. Effective procedures to respond to actual or potential workplace violence emergencies, including, but not limited to, effective means to alert employees of the presence, location and nature of workplace violence emergencies, evacuation or sheltering plans appropriate and feasible for the worksite, and how to obtain help from staff assigned to respond to workplace violence emergencies, if any, security personnel, if any, and law enforcement.
- h. Procedures to develop and provide required training.
- i. Procedures to identify and evaluate workplace violence hazards, including, but not limited to, scheduled periodic inspections to identify unsafe conditions and work practices, and employee reports and concerns. Inspections shall be conducted when the WVPP is established, after each workplace violence incident, and whenever the employer is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.
- j. Procedures to correct workplace violence hazards in a timely manner.
- k. Procedures for post incident response and investigation.

(con’t pg 28)



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By: Stacy Henderson, Henderson Hatfield, A Professional Company

- l. Procedures to review the effectiveness of the WVPP and revise the WVPP as needed, including, but not limited to, procedures to obtain the active involvement of employees and authorized employee representatives in reviewing the WVPP. The WVPP should be reviewed at least annually, when a deficiency is observed or becomes apparent, and after a workplace violence incident.
- m. Procedures and other information required by the Division of Occupational Safety & Health and Standards Board as being necessary and appropriate to protect the health and safety of employees.

The employer must also obtain active involvement of employees and any unions in developing the WVPP.

2. **Training** - Employers must provide effective training to employees regarding workplace violence hazards specific to the employees' jobs, strategies to avoid physical harm, the WVPP and any new or previously unrecognized workplace violence hazard that are identified. The training must provide an opportunity for interactive questions and answers about the WVPP.
3. **Recordkeeping** - Employers must record information in a violent incident log, for every workplace violence incident, with the information gathered from employee statements, witness statements and the investigation findings, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Incident date, time, location.
 - b. Workplace violence "Type" (1, 2, 3, and/or 4).
 - c. Detailed description of the incident.
 - d. Classification of who committed the violence.
 - e. The circumstances at the time of the incident.
 - f. Where the incident occurred.
 - g. Specific incident characteristics, such as physical attacks, weapon involvement, threats, sexual assault, animal incidents or other events.

- h. What the consequences of the incident were, including any involvement law enforcement.
- i. What steps were taken to protect employees from further threat or hazards.
- j. Who completed the log, including their name, job title, and the date complete

The violent incident log must exclude any personal information that would identify any person involved in a violent incident.

Employers must also create and maintain records of workplace violence hazard identification, evaluation and correction and training records, maintain all records for a minimum of 5 years, with the exception of the training records, which must be maintained for 1 year, and make the records available to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

4. **Excluded Employers** - The new requirements do not apply to the following:
 - a. Places of employment where there are fewer than 10 employees working at the place at any given time and that are not accessible to the public, provided they are in compliance with the requirement to develop and maintain an IIPP.
 - b. Employees teleworking from a location of their own choice that is not under the employer's control.
 - c. Employers already covered by California's existing workplace violence prevention standards for healthcare.
 - d. Specified public sector employers and facilities (e.g., Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and law enforcement agencies).

California has developed a helpful [Workplace Violence Prevention Website](#) and [Fact Sheet](#) to assist employers in complying with the new requirements.

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