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NJDOL Raises Awareness, Focuses Enforcement on Panic Device Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) announced today that will be conducting a focused effort on enforcement of the statewide [Panic Device law](#) that helps protect housekeeping and room service staff who work alone in guest rooms.

NJDOL is also partnering with the New Jersey Restaurant and Hospitality Association to co-host a webinar at 11 am on Feb. 22 to raise awareness among hotel employers on their responsibilities under the law. NJDOL also recently posted updated guidance on [its website](#) for hotel workers and employers.

The Panic Device law signed by Governor Phil Murphy helps protect hotel employees who work alone in guest rooms at large hotels, motels and inns from sexual assault, harassment and other dangerous working conditions by equipping them with a device they can wear or carry that can immediately summon help if the need arises.

“Hospitality workers often work in isolation, during early morning or late-night hours, leaving them vulnerable to unique dangers,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “Additionally, these workers may not be familiar with their work rights or have the courage to speak up, so this law provides a needed safety net for this vulnerable worker population.”

Under the law, hotels with 100+ guest rooms must equip all full and part-time staff assigned to work alone in guest rooms with panic devices. With an easy touch, tap or voice signal, an employee must be able to summon assistance from a security officer, supervisor or other appropriate hotel staff member if they feel they are in immediate danger or are witnessing a crime.

The hotel/motel employer must advise guests that staff possess the devices, either by requiring them to acknowledge the policy upon check-in or by posting signs inside guest room doors detailing the panic device policy and the rights of hotel employees.

The law requires hotels to keep a record of the accusations it receives and maintain the name of the accused guest on a list for five years from the date of the incident, and suspected misconduct or criminal activity must be reported to law enforcement. The law explicitly prohibits employers from punishing an employee who activates a panic device.

In addition, the employer must notify other employees of the presence and location of any accused guests and allow them to opt out of servicing such locations. The hotel/motel must also immediately reassign the hotel employee who activated the panic device to a different work area away from the accused guest’s room for the duration of their stay.

Hotels that violate the law can be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 for the first violation and \$10,000 for subsequent violations.

To view updated guidance or read more about the law, [click here](#).

Join the webinar for hotel owners and managers at 11 am on February 22 [here](#).

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Department of Labor
1 John Fitch Plz,
Trenton, NJ 08611