

Summary of 2025 Employment Law Changes

In an effort to get you ready for 2025 as easily as possible, we've created this summary of 2025 employment law changes. These are the general laws that will apply to most employers, but always double check with an attorney to ensure there are no other "sneaky" laws that apply based on your situation; this may not be a complete list of legal changes applicable to you.

If you're already a client of Better and you'd like help with your annual updates: great! Please follow the instructions below and then send this completed document to olivia@inbetterwetrust.com, along with any documents requested here.

If you're not a client of Better but would like to become one, please send an email to bertie@inbetterwetrust.com. Remember, the only way to form an attorney-client relationship with Better is through a signed Engagement Letter.

Happy reading!

1. Annual State Minimum Wage and Exempt Salary Update

- a. Hourly minimum wage guaranteed to increase to at least \$16.50 on January 1, 2025.
- b. Annual salary for exempt employees (under Executive, Administrative, or Professional exemption) guaranteed to increase to at least \$68,640 on January 1, 2025.
- c. Both of the above rates could increase slightly more if Proposition 32 passes in the November election.

Your Next Steps	Done?
Read the full lesson here!	✓
Determine if any of your existing or incoming employees will be paid less than the rates above. If so, you'll need to increase pay by January 1.	
<p>If you're a current client of Better and you'd like our help complying with this change, please check the box to the right. (If you don't need our help, leave the box blank and move on to the next update!)</p> <p>Client will send the following documents described below (in either Microsoft Word or Google Doc form ONLY) to olivia@inbetterwetrust.com and she will follow up with an estimate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All existing/current job offer letters for employees or other documentation that describes their currently pay rate; and• Your current employee handbook.	

2. New and Improved Rights for Victims of Violence

- a. Updated definitions for victims of qualifying acts of violence, clarifying protections.
- b. Lots of prohibitions against discrimination and retaliation against victims of qualifying acts of violence, or family members of victims.
- c. Expanded leave options relating to status as a victim of qualifying acts of violence.
- d. Employees are now permitted to sue their employers in court, rather than bringing an administrative action, if an employer violates California laws protecting victims of qualifying acts of violence.

Your Next Steps	Done? ✓
Read the full lesson here ! In full candor, this was the largest update and really should be read carefully. This summary is definitely not enough!	
If you have an employee handbook, then you will need to make updates to your Crime Victim’s Leave policies to reflect these changes. You’ll also want to make changes to the verbiage of your paid sick days policy, as these laws do change that slightly.	
Ensure you have a Workplace Violence Prevention Program in place, if your workplace is required to have one. Read more about this requirement here .	
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3. Changes to Family Leave

- a. Employers can no longer require employees to take two (2) weeks of vacation (if accrued/available) prior to receiving state-administered Paid Family Leave (“PFL”) benefits.
- b. That’s pretty much it, unless you’re a San Francisco-based employer. If so, then you may have additional obligations under the San Francisco’s Paid Parental Leave Ordinance.

Your Next Steps	Done?
	✓
Read the full lesson here!	
If you offer paid vacation/PTO that isn't explicitly a paid sick day, determine if your policies require use of that paid vacation before PFL can be used.	
Ensure you have a Workplace Violence Prevention Program in place, if your workplace is required to have one. Read more about this requirement here .	
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4. Three Anti-Discrimination Changes in California

- The Fair Employment and Housing Act amended to clarify that discrimination based on intersectionality is also prohibited.
- Changes to the language of The CROWN Act, which concerns protective hairstyles.
- Local agencies are now empowered to enforce local anti-discrimination laws, in addition to any state-level anti-discrimination laws.

Your Next Steps	Done?
	✓
Read the full lesson here!	
Update your handbook and other workplace policies to reflect new definitions/changes.	
Review any previous employee complaints to avoid pitfalls and to foster a healthy workplace.	
Train your employees routinely around harassment and discrimination prevention.	

Keep your eyes out for any applicable local anti-discrimination laws that may apply to you in the future, as they may mean additional compliance.	
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5. Captive Audience Meeting Ban

- New law prohibits employer-sponsored mandatory meetings that discuss religious or political matters, including union-representation discussions.
- Motivation behind this was to prevent "union busting" and also forcing employees to listen to political/religious messages in a more and more polarized world.
- That's the gist!

Your Next Steps	Done?
	✓
Read the full lesson here !	
If religious or political discussions routinely take place in your workplace, determine where in your policies you can underscore that all such discussions are entirely voluntary and employees will not face adverse action for declining to participate.	
Consider consulting with an attorney to determine if you can/should restrict political speech or religious proselytizing in the workplace.	
All employers should train their managers about this new law (including training around what is allowed to be discussed in meetings).	
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- Your current employee handbook; and
- Any standalone policies regarding political or religious speech in the workplace.

6. Employer's Right to Request Driver's License from Job Applicants

- a. Employers must meet a two-part test before they can include a statement in a job advertisement, posting, application or any other material requiring that an applicant have a driver's license:
 - i. The employer must reasonably expect driving to be one of the job functions for the position; and
 - ii. The employer must reasonably believe that satisfying the job function using an alternative form of transportation would not be comparable in travel time or cost to the business.
- b. This new law falls under FEHA, which means penalties can be monetary or injunctive.

Your Next Steps	Done? ✓
Read the full lesson here!	

<p>If you'll be hiring any time in the future, ensure that you have a written job description that you can evaluate against the test above, and speak to an attorney if you don't feel comfortable applying the test on your own.</p>	
<p>Review your handbooks or other policies to ensure there are no references to driver's license requirements in these before you give them to any new employees.</p>	
<p>Ensure anyone helping you hire (HR person, managers, etc.) is aware of this change as well.</p>	
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7. San Diego County's Fair Chance Ordinance Implementation

- New Fair Chance Ordinance (or "FCO") applies to employers with five (5) or more employees doing business in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County, including doing remote work from a location within the unincorporated areas of the County.
- Attempts to help formerly incarcerated people back into the job force, wherever appropriate.
- Adds additional requirements to the state-level framework already in place regarding criminal background checks in employment.

Your Next Steps	Done? ✓
Read the full lesson here!	

Update your criminal background check policy to be inclusive of the requirements of this change.	
Ensure anyone helping you hire (HR person, managers, etc.) is aware of this change as well.	
Create a system to maintain documentation relating to background checks for at least three (3) years.	
Review your existing protocols to ensure compliance, and make sure you have systems and timekeeping mechanisms in place for adverse action notices.	
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8. Annual San Francisco Health Care Security Ordinance Update

- If you're a San Francisco-based employer and you have 20+ employees, you'll need to review the annual San Francisco Health Care Security Ordinance employer expenditure rate.
- That's basically it—this number goes up each year!

Your Next Steps	Done? ✓
Read the full lesson here!	
Update your systems to reflect the increased expenditure rate.	

9. Bonus! Freelancer Protections

- a. If you hire independent contractors, you need to ensure that you have a written contract in place that covers specific information.
- b. If you worked with Better in the past to create your independent contractor agreement, you will likely not need to make drastic changes, but there may be one area (described in the lesson) that needs a little bit of extra information moving forward.

Your Next Steps	Done? ✓
Read the full lesson here!	
If you plan on hiring freelance workers (or renewing any existing freelance worker relationships) after January 1, 2025, speak to an attorney to create a customized independent contractor agreement for your use. This is not something we ever recommend tackling completely on your own!	
If you have already created an agreement with an attorney, double check that it's still sufficient for use without additional edits. This shouldn't take an attorney very long to confirm (15 minutes or less, in most cases).	
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