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#### Chicago Passes New Law to Protect Hotel Employees Against Sexual Assault

To better protect hotel workers against sexual harassment and assault, Chicago passed the “Hands Off Pants On” Ordinance. The Ordinance requires Hotels in the City of Chicago to adopt (1) a “panic button” system and (2) anti-sexual harassment policy.

##### I. Panic Button System

By **July 1, 2018**, hotels must provide employees who work alone in guest rooms or restrooms with a “panic button” or other notification device, at no cost to the employees. The device must be a “portable emergency contact device” that allows employees to alert and summon hotel security or management for help in the event the employee reasonably believes that an ongoing crime, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other emergency is occurring in the employee’s presence.

In implementing these new “panic button” systems, Hotel employers should be prepared to provide training to employees regarding how to use the devices and respond to alerts.

##### II. Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy

By **January 7, 2018**, hotels must develop, maintain, and comply with a written anti-sexual harassment policy designed to protect employees against sexual assault and sexual harassment by hotel guests.

The Policy must:

1. Encourage employees to immediately report instances of alleged sexual assault and sexual harassment by guests;

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2. Describe the procedures that the employee and hotel will follow in response to such reports;
3. Instruct employees to stop working and immediately leave the area of the perceived danger until hotel security or the police arrive to provide assistance;
4. Offer temporary work assignments to the complaining employee for the duration of the offending guest's stay at the hotel;
5. Provide employees with paid time off to file any appropriate police reports or testify as a witness in any legal proceedings arising from the incident;
6. Inform employees that the Illinois Human Rights Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance provide additional protections against sexual harassment in the workplace; and
7. Inform employees that they will not be retaliated against for reasonably using a panic button or notification device.

### **No Retaliation**

The new law makes it unlawful for hotels to retaliate against employees for reasonably using a panic button or notification device, or otherwise disclosing, reporting, or testifying about any violation of the Ordinance. Employees can file complaints alleging violations of the Ordinance with the Chicago Commission on Human Relations.

### **Violation Penalties**

- Hotels that commit two or more violations of this Ordinance in any 12-month period are subject to having their license suspended or revoked by the City.
- Hotels may also incur between \$250 and \$500 in daily fines for each violation of the Ordinance.