
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5496

AN ACT CONCERNING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PROTECTIONS FOR UTILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES.

SUMMARY

This bill requires utility companies to assess the factors that may place their employees at risk of being a workplace violence victim when providing services directly to customers (such as when working directly with customers in their homes or with customers who have a previous history of violence toward employees). It requires the companies to develop and implement workplace violence prevention and response training for these employees that includes, among other things, the company's methods for preventing workplace violence incidents, and conflict resolution and non-violent self-defense responses.

The bill requires the companies to (1) maintain records that detail each incidence of workplace violence and include the specific location where it occurred and (2) give the Department of Labor, by each January 1, a report on the number of workplace violence incidents that occurred during the previous calendar year and the specific location where each incident occurred.

The bill applies to (1) municipal electric, gas, or water companies; (2) regional water authorities and sewer districts; (3) municipal public works departments; and (4) public service companies regulated by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (generally, investor-owned utility companies). Under the bill, "workplace violence" is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at a work site, but it does not include this behavior at the employer's site.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

RISK ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING REQUIREMENT

The bill requires the utility companies, by January 1, 2027, to have a risk assessment of the factors that may place employees who provide services directly to customers at risk of being a victim of workplace violence by virtue of their role as the company's employee. The assessment must at least cover the risks of (1) working directly with customers in their homes, (2) working late nights or early morning hours, (3) exchanging money with customers, (4) working alone or in small numbers, (5) customers with a previous history of violence toward employees, and (6) the crime rate in the municipality where the employee will provide services. The crime rates used must be those determined in the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's most recent annual crime report.

The bill then requires each company, by July 1, 2027, to develop and implement a workplace violence prevention and response training program for employees who provide services directly to customers. The training must be given at hire and then annually, and at least include:

1. the risk factors identified in the risk assessment;
2. methods the company will use to prevent workplace violence incidents, including (a) ways to minimize how much cash an employee carries during a work shift and (b) establishing and implementing reporting systems for incidents of violent or aggressive behavior;
3. conflict resolution and non-violent self-defense responses; and
4. ways the employees can protect themselves from the risks.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 9 Nay 4 (03/17/2026)