

CALAOMS OFFICE MANAGER'S FORUM

2026 Compliance Roundup

Wages, Leave, AI, and What Every Dental Office Manager Needs to Know

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October 7, 2026 • 1:00–2:00 PM PT

TODAY'S SESSION

What We'll Cover



Wages & Hours

Minimum wage, exempt salary thresholds, and local pay-rate updates



Notices & Leave

New mandatory notices, emergency contact rules, and expanded sick leave



AI in the Office

California's new rules on AI and automated decisions in employment



Ongoing Reminders

Compliance obligations that remain in effect and need attention

01



Wages & Hours

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SECTION 01

Wages & Hours: What Changed for 2026

\$16.90

CA minimum wage
(effective Jan 1, 2026)

\$70,304

Minimum exempt
salary threshold, annually

Dozens

of cities and counties set a
higher local minimum wage

- Health care and fast-food operations follow different, higher wage schedules — confirm your practice's correct rate rather than assuming the general state minimum applies.
- Local rates apply where the work is performed, and the higher rate always controls — for example, San Francisco \$19.61, Los Angeles \$18.42, San Jose \$18.45, San Diego \$17.75 (rates as of July 2026). Check your city and county.
- Audit current salaries against the new \$70,304 exempt threshold; misclassified staff below this line must be reclassified as non-exempt.

SECTION 01

Health Care Worker Minimum Wage (SB 525)

Two-part test

Coverage requires a covered facility type AND work that provides or supports patient care. The facility type decides coverage, not the practice’s name.

Broad worker coverage

If the facility is covered, it reaches clerical, scheduling, janitorial, food service, and security staff — not just clinicians.

Who’s in, who’s out

Covered: hospitals, dialysis, licensed clinics, and physician groups of 25+. Exempt: groups with 24 or fewer physicians.

Salaried staff

Exempt pay floor is the greater of 150% of the health care rate (x 2,080 hrs) or 200% of the state minimum wage.

RATES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

\$25.00

Large health systems (10,000+ employees) and dialysis clinics

\$23.00

Physician groups of 25+ and other covered facilities

\$22.00

Community, rural health, and urgent care clinics

\$19.28

Safety-net and rural independent hospitals

Most standalone private dental and oral surgery offices are not on the covered list — confirm how your facility is licensed before assuming either way.

DIR FAQ: www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Health-Care-Worker-Minimum-Wage-FAQ.htm

02



Notices & Leave

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SECTION 02

Notices & Leave: New Requirements

Feb 1, 2026

Annual Workers' Rights Notice

A standalone written notice of workers' rights (SB 294) must go to every current employee, and to new hires at time of hire, each year going forward.

Mar 30, 2026

Emergency Contact Designation

Employees must be given the option to name an emergency contact — and to specify whether that contact should be notified if the employee is arrested or detained at work.

In effect now

Expanded Paid Sick Leave

Paid sick leave now covers victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other violent acts — or their family members — plus jury duty/subpoena compliance.

In effect now

“Stay-or-Pay” Ban (AB 692)

Employers can no longer require repayment of training or relocation costs if an employee leaves early — remove any such clauses from contracts.

Labor Commissioner SB 294 notice template: www.dir.ca.gov/NewLaborLaws

English: www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Know-Your-Rights-Notice/Know-Your-Rights-Notice-English.pdf

Spanish: www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Know-Your-Rights-Notice/Know-Your-Rights-Notice-Spanish.pdf

03



AI in the Office

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SECTION 03

AI & Automated Decisions: New CA Rules

Effective October 1, 2025, California's Civil Rights Council issued regulations addressing the use of AI and automated-decision systems (ADS) in employment.

What's Prohibited

Using an automated-decision system or selection criteria that discriminates against an applicant or employee based on any protected characteristic under California law.

What's Required

Stronger recordkeeping for AI/ADS used in hiring, discipline, or separation decisions — whether run in-house or by a third-party vendor.

What's Recommended

Bias testing before implementation, staff training on proper use, and vendor agreements that require compliance and indemnification.

Full automated decision-making technology (ADMT) requirements take effect January 1, 2027 — start preparing now.

04



Ongoing Reminders

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SECTION 04

Ongoing Reminders: Still in Effect



Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

This law has been in effect over a year — employers must maintain a written plan developed with employee participation, with specific required procedures.



Infection Control Training

Unlicensed dental assistants must complete the required infection control course before any potential exposure to blood or saliva; the approved virtual/asynchronous format is not yet available.



Equal Pay Act Claims Window

The statute of limitations for Equal Pay Act claims now extends to three years, with recoverable damages reaching back up to six years — pay equity recordkeeping matters more than ever.

Key Takeaways

1

Audit wages and exempt classifications now — the \$16.90 minimum and \$70,304 exempt threshold are already in effect.

2

Update your handbook and notice process for the Feb 1 workers' rights notice and Mar 30 emergency contact deadline.

3

If you use AI in hiring, scheduling, or monitoring, document it, test it for bias, and confirm vendor compliance.

4

Keep your violence prevention plan and infection control training current — these obligations don't expire.

Thank You

Questions? Let's discuss.

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