



UniformNations

UNIFORM LAWS AND REGULATIONS

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OVERVIEW OF UNIFORM LAWS, STANDARDS, AND REGULATIONS

BY RYAN MCHUGH

For over four decades, the state and federal uniform standards and laws have been established, enacted, and updated in an effort to create safe and healthy working conditions for employees in numerous industries.

Placing a greater priority on safety in the workplace, **uniform service providers** must adhere to all standards and remain compliant to ensure the uniforms they provide will both protect employees and protect employers from the costs of steep penalties and potential liabilities.

Given the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's latest updates which now mandate employers provide workers with personal protective

equipment, throughout this in-depth white paper we provide a breakdown on uniform laws—with information including what these regulations mean for companies, as well as references and summaries for applicable uniform standards by industry.

In the most general sense, uniform laws and regulations are designed to help protect employees in the workplace and the help limit the potential liabilities for companies in the event of costly accidents.

Addressing the common injury risks for various industries such as electrical, chemical, or physical hazards, compliance with uniform and personal protective

equipment (PPE) standards helps to not only avoid costly fines for businesses, but also send the right message to employees that their safety is a priority.

In 1970, the Federal Government passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Establishing the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#), the law seeks to set and enforce standards for creating a safe and healthy work environment for employees. For employers seeking uniform purchase or rental services, OSHA makes compliant providers all the more important for eliminating liabilities.

In addition to the federal safety standards laid out by OSHA, national consensus standards—defined as standards developed by the same persons they affect which are adopted by a nationally recognized organization—are also often [incorporated by reference in different OSHA standards](#).

As one example, the [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#) was established in 1896 in an ongoing effort to eliminate death, injury, and loss as a result of fire and electrical hazards in modern workplaces. For construction or automotive employers, NFPA safety and protection codes are a key component to ensuring uniforms and PPE are up to standard.

Additionally, the [American National Standards Institute \(ANSI\)](#) works to create and facilitate national consensus standards to further establish guidelines for ensuring the health and safety of employees and consumers. Often laying out standards for personally protective equipment, ANSI regulates how employers from various industries protect employees from workplace hazards.

Many US states and territories have also created OSHA-approved state plans for employee uniform and PPE regulations. To find regulations and resources specific to your state, businesses can [check out this site for more information](#).



WHAT UNIFORM LAWS MEAN FOR COMPANIES

Uniform laws and regulations are designed to protect employees. More specifically, many detail the [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) and uniforms designed to safeguard against the various occupational hazards workers are exposed to each day.

When assessing company needs and selecting a suitable [uniform service](#), it's essential employers give specific consideration to these potential hazards in their workplace or processes which can cause harm to the eyes, face, feet, hands, and head, and in turn equip employees with the protective equipment needed to match each hazard.

For employers, noncompliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's standards for uniforms

and PPE [can impose hefty fines](#) beginning at a maximum of \$12,470 for a single violation, with penalties for failure to abate adding another potential \$12,470 per day once past deadlines. When violations are willful or repeated, employer noncompliance can potentially cost companies as much as \$124,700 per violation.

Whether it's a hospital needing sanitized lab coats, a restaurant needing flame-resistant kitchen equipment, or an auto, construction, or industrial company looking for protective work shirts, when uniforms are either purchased or rented through compliant providers, employers can rely on their uniform service to follow all applicable standards and guidelines.



APPLICABLE UNIFORM STANDARDS, LAWS, AND REGULATIONS BY INDUSTRY



Compliance with PPE and uniform standards isn't just a top-priority for uniform service providers because of the substantial fines and penalties noncompliance poses, but also because uniforms and equipment not up to standard can do serious damage to the provider's reputation.

Below are the applicable uniform laws and regulations providers follow broken out by industry. However, it should be noted that the following is intended to be used for reference only, and companies should still seek legal counsel to ensure they are also compliant with all applicable state, city, and county uniform requirements or regulations.

HEALTHCARE

OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR 1910.1030(d)(3)) – This standard expands on laws regarding occupational exposure to OPIMs, detailing equipment and uniforms like lab coats, face shields and ventilation devices which help to prevent blood or OPIMs reaching and causing harm to employees.

General Requirements (29 CFR 1910.132) – Requires employers to provide workers personal protective equipment to protect from various workplace hazards able to cause injury or impairment, such as work

processes and environments, chemical or radiological hazards, and other irritants.

Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134) – This standard works to protect healthcare employees from airborne hazards like harmful fumes, gases, or vapors by identifying respiratory equipment to prevent contamination.

Hand Protection (29 CFR 1910.138) – Helps prevent employee exposure to extreme heat, cuts and sharps punctures, chemical burns, and other OPIMs or unsafe substances.

CONSTRUCTION AND AUTOMOTIVE

General Requirements (29 CFR 1910.132) – Requires employers to provide workers personal protective equipment to protect from various workplace hazards able to cause injury or impairment, such as work processes and environments, chemical or radiological hazards, and other irritants.

Eye and Face Protection (29 CFR 1910.133) – In workplaces with potential hazards to the eyes or face such as flying particles, molten metal, chemicals, or light radiation, this standard outlines requirements for

protective eye and face equipment to prevent employee injury.

Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134) – Helps to protect construction or automotive workers from harmful airborne hazards like dusts, fumes, gases, or smokes by identifying respiratory equipment to protect from disease or contamination.

Head Protection (29 CFR 1910.135) – This standard outlines the criteria for protective helmets and head equipment needed to protect employees in workplaces where hazards like falling objects or electrical shocks can potentially cause injury to the head.

Foot Protection (29 CFR 1910.136) – The foot protection standard provides the general requirements for protective shoes and footwear able to protect construction or automotive employees from hazards like falling and rolling objects, punctures to the sole of shoes, and electrical shocks or static discharge.

Electrical Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1910.137) – Building on other regulations regarding electrical hazards, this standard details equipment like rubber insulated gloves or sleeves to prevent employee injury from electric-shock hazards.

Hand Protection (29 CFR 1910.138) – This standard helps to prevent occupational exposure to unsafe substances and protect employees from severe abrasions, cuts, punctures, and extreme heat or burns.

RESTAURANTS AND FOOD SERVICE

General Requirements (29 CFR 1910.132) – Requires employers to provide workers personal protective equipment to protect from various workplace hazards able to cause injury or impairment, such as work processes and environments, chemical or radiological hazards, and other irritants.

Foot Protection (29 CFR 1910.136) – Outlining the general requirements for protective footwear, this standard helps food service employees to avoid injury from workplace hazards like slippery surfaces with the use of non-slip or other protective shoes.

Hand Protection (29 CFR 1910.138) – With workplace hazards including chances for severe cuts, burns, and exposure to harmful liquids and substances, appropriate gloves and other hand protection is needed to reduce the risk of employee injury.



CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

Current laws and regulations for employee uniforms and PPE are in turn forcing uniform providers to step-up the safety and health standards for their services to ensure they not only protect employees from workplace hazards, but employers from costly noncompliance fines.

By providing equipment and uniforms which are up to the standards of organizations including NFPA, ANSI, and OSHA, employers seeking **uniform services** can ensure they're working with a reliable uniform provider who will remain compliant with regulations and follow all industry guidelines.

Are You Considering National Consensus Standards?

When OSHA uniform and PPE standards also incorporate national consensus standards like ANSI, it's

not uncommon for standards to require equipment to be marked to identify its manufacturer—further requiring providers and employers to ensure the uniforms they provide are up to standard.

Are You Keeping Up to Date with Changing Regulations?

PPE and uniform standards established and facilitated by various organizations aren't set in stone—instead they're updated as necessary to appropriately address new or changing work hazards.

When employers seek uniform services through compliant providers however, they can rest assured their uniforms and equipment always adhere to the latest regulations.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sanitation or Safety: How to Find the Best Uniform Service to Suit Your Business

When it comes to finding the right uniforms and PPE for your business, it's important to assess both injury as well as infection risks to determine how best to balance safety and sanitation when selecting uniforms. Get insight on strategies to best suit your protection needs here.

HLAC: What It Is and Why Your Healthcare Facility Should Care

Like standards and regulations addressing personal protective equipment and uniforms, additional laws require specific handling and laundry processes for soiled uniforms and linens. While in the past, these laws made it difficult to ensure laundry services were compliant, learn more about how organizations like HLAC are helping to make outsourcing laundry a more reliable option for employers.