

# ‘Tis the (Retail) Season, Part I: OSHA’s Tips for a Safe Black Friday

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In advance of the holiday season, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is reminding retail employers to take precautions to prevent workplace injuries during major sales events, including Black Friday. According to a news release issued by OSHA on November 17, 2014, “[t]ragic consequences and....

In advance of the holiday season, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is reminding retail employers to take precautions to prevent workplace injuries during major sales events, including Black Friday. According to a news release issued by OSHA on November 17, 2014, “[t]ragic consequences and risk to workers can occur if the proper safety procedures are ignored.” The release also reminds retailers about the 2008 trampling death of a retail worker when shoppers rushed through the store to take advantage of Black Friday sales. “During the hectic shopping season, retail workers should not be put at risk of injury or death,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “OSHA urges retailers to take the time to adopt a crowd management plan and follow a few simple guidelines to prevent unnecessary harm to retail employees.”

On November 12, 2014, OSHA also sent letters to major retailers about the potential hazards involved with managing large crowds at retail stores during the holiday season when sales events attract a higher number of shoppers. Retailers were encouraged to use the OSHA safety guidelines, Crowd Management Safety Guidelines for Retailers, provided in the OSHA fact sheet. A [sample of the letter](#) that was sent can be found on the OSHA website.

OSHA also advised retailers that they should implement crowd management plans that, at a minimum, should include, implement, or provide for the following elements:

- on-site trained security personnel or police officers
- barricades or rope lines for pedestrians in front of store entrances

- crowd control measures that take effect well in advance of the time customers are expected to arrive at the store (which may be earlier than the store's opening)
- emergency procedures to address potential dangers
- methods for explaining approach and entrance procedures to the arriving public
- strategies for prohibiting customers from entering stores once they reach their maximum occupancy level
- prohibitions against blocking or locking exit doors.

According to a shareholder in the Atlanta office of Ogletree Deakins, “in advance of the holiday season, retailers should review the OSHA guidelines and workplace policies concerning the holiday shopping season (or concerning other events where large crowds may gather), to ensure that their policies reflect OSHA’s suggestions.”

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#### TOPICS

[Retail](#), [Workplace Safety and Health](#)