WAC 296-137-050 Panic buttons. (1) Every hotel, motel, retail, security guard entity, or property services contractor, who employs an isolated employee, must provide a panic button to each isolated employee.

(2) Panic buttons must accurately identify the isolated employee's specific location. The location must be as specific as the work location necessitates to allow immediate assistance to be provided when an alarm is triggered. Employers may use different methods in order to pinpoint an employee's specific location including, but not limited to:

(a) A schedule of where the isolated employee would be at a certain time;

(b) An auditory alarm that also produces a signal to a responder;

(c) An isolated employee providing status updates of their specific location as it changes; or

(d) An isolated employee working in the presence of another worker.

(3) Responders may include properly trained representatives of the employer, including managers or supervisors, security guards, and in some cases, other workers with proper training, experience, and education that qualifies them to respond to emergency incidents.

(4) Effective signals must allow responders to accurately detect the isolated employee's location and distinguish it from other audible or visual alarms or noise without physical or electronic barriers such as poor cellular service or WiFi signals. The activation of one panic button must not obscure the activation of others.

(5) Immediate assistance must include on-scene assistance provided within a reasonable amount of time to:

(a) Confirm an emergency is taking place or an isolated employee reasonably believes they are at risk of harm;

(b) Confirm an equipment failure did not occur; and

(c) Summon applicable emergency services.

(6) A panic button must be simple to activate. A panic button will not be considered "simple to activate" if it requires continued effort by the isolated employee to sustain a signal or if activation is delayed as in situations where the isolated employee must enter passwords, click through multiple screens or applications, or wait for the system to turn on.

(7) A panic button must reliably work in all locations that the isolated employee performs their work and during all shifts that the isolated employee works.

(8) An employer must maintain a record of the purchase and utilization of panic buttons provided to its isolated employees under this section. Records must be provided to the department upon request.

(9) The department must publish advice and guidance for employers with 50 or fewer employees relating to RCW 49.60.515 (1)(d).

(10) This section does not apply to contracted security guard companies licensed under chapter 18.170 RCW.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 49.60 RCW. WSR 26-01-099, s 296-137-050, filed 12/16/25, effective 1/16/26.]