



2023 Verkada Workplace Safety Survey:

# America's Frontline Workers in Crisis





## 2023 Verkada Workplace Safety Survey



This is a difficult moment for frontline workers. Already overextended, the average American worker is dealing with a new on-the-job concern: they don't feel safe at work.

It's hard to blame them. Today we see images of workers being accosted by irate fast food customers, aggressive airline passengers and violent hospital patients. Every hour, two nurses in the United States are the victims of assault at their workplace<sup>1</sup>. Nearly half of hospital nurses reported a rise in workplace violence last year, with a year-on-year increase of 119 percent<sup>2</sup>. Assaults and theft in retail settings have been increasing at a faster pace than the national average, and retail workers are tired of fearing for their safety.<sup>3</sup>

The people who serve in these critical roles, driving our economy and providing a service to the public, make up the vast majority of America's workforce today. Approximately 70 percent of the U.S. workforce is concentrated in frontline jobs<sup>4</sup>, from healthcare to retail and service sectors, and beyond.

To better understand the state of workplace safety and the emotional toll it takes on frontline workers, Verkada surveyed 1,000 professionals across major industries, including consumer banking, healthcare, retail, and hospitality. Our findings, which are detailed in this report, shine a light on the challenges facing frontline workers today.

**Thank you for reading.**



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Frontline workers are more concerned about their safety on the job than they were a year ago.

Frontline workers are on edge about their safety. One in three frontline workers have felt unsafe on the job in the last year, and 58% of frontline workers feel that the threat of physical harm is on the rise.

40% say they are more concerned about personal safety at work than they were a year ago.

1 in 3 Frontline workers have felt unsafe on the job in the last year.





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And those concerns are warranted.

For a significant portion of workers, being attacked on the job has become an increasingly real possibility. According to our survey, 76% of employers have experienced a security incident in the last year.

Banking and healthcare have been the most affected, with 4 in 5 employers reporting security incidents in the last year.

Security incidents reported by employers in the last year.



“I am an ICU nurse...we’ve had a homicide, we’ve been threatened by patients & family many times... patients who become combative... **it seems to be getting worse.**”



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Violent, aggressive and erratic behavior from customers and visitors is the main cause of distress for workers about their physical safety.

60% of workers are worried about aggressive or erratic behavior from customers, clients or guests.



Healthcare workers are especially concerned with 69% reporting worries about aggressive or erratic behavior among patients or visitors. Fifty-nine percent regularly worry about being physically assaulted at work.

The two biggest sources of concern for retail workers are erratic or aggressive behavior from customers (58%) and theft (58%), and nearly half (49%) of retail workers say theft and vandalism is on the rise.

Active shooter scenarios are a top concern for nearly half (46%) of frontline workers, and only a third say they've received training from their employer on how to respond to an active shooter situation.



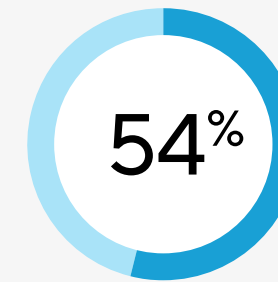
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Physical security is a labor issue. Concerns about physical safety threaten to exacerbate existing labor shortages in fields most important to Americans' health and the economy.

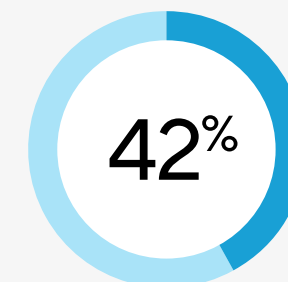
43% of employers say that workplace safety has been a barrier to hiring or retaining workers.



Banking and healthcare are the fields most impacted.



Banking  
Employers

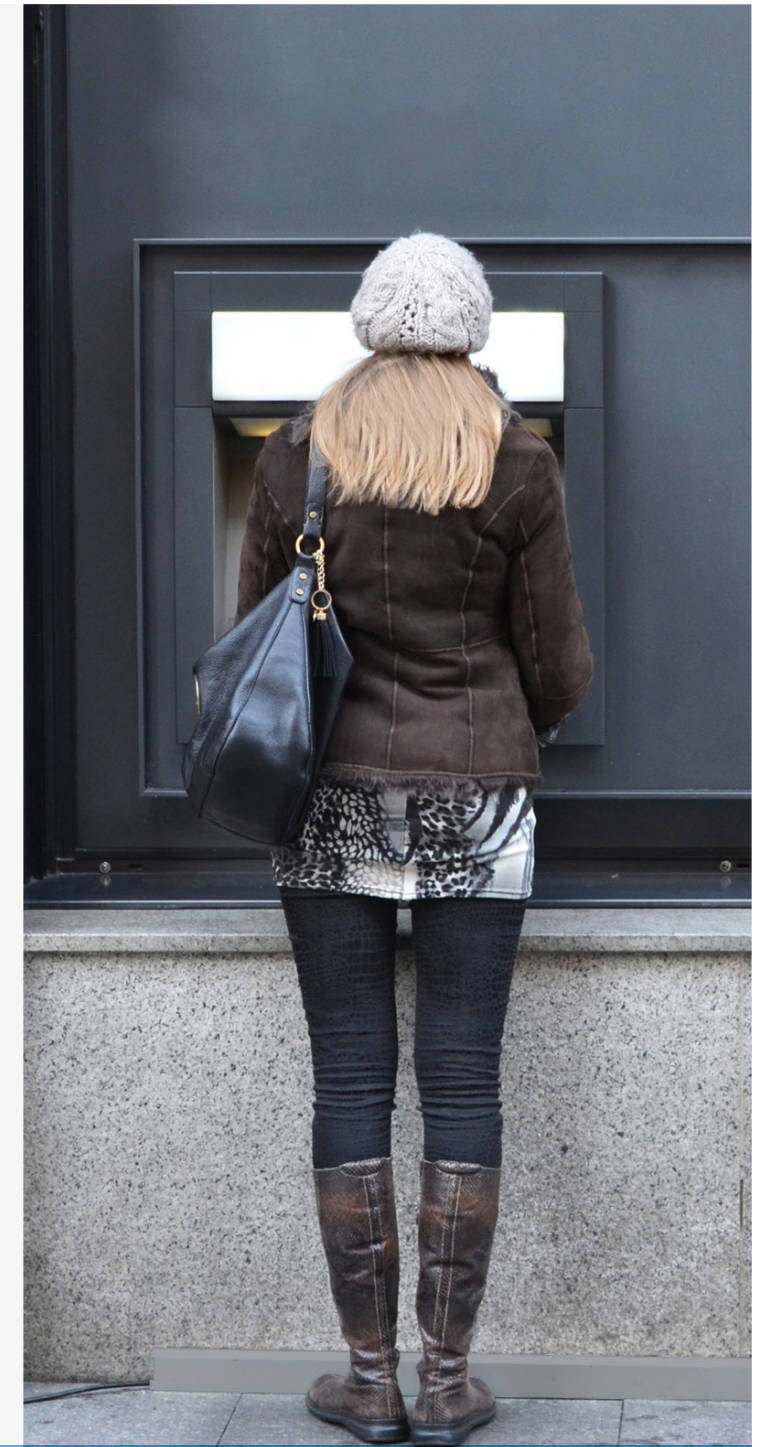


Healthcare  
Employers

54% of banking employers and 42% of healthcare employers cited safety as a roadblock that is contributing to ongoing labor shortages.

1 in 4

One in four people have turned down job opportunities because they felt vulnerable or an increased level of risk.



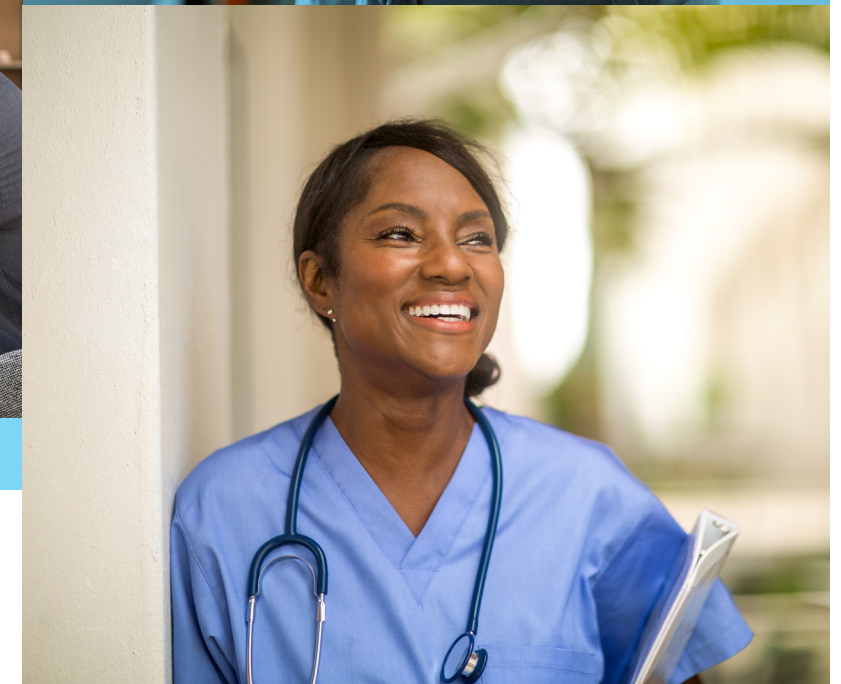


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There is a significant divide between employers' perception of job safety and the experiences and concerns of their workers.

69% of leaders or managers report feeling very safe at work and 67% think their direct reports feel equally safe.

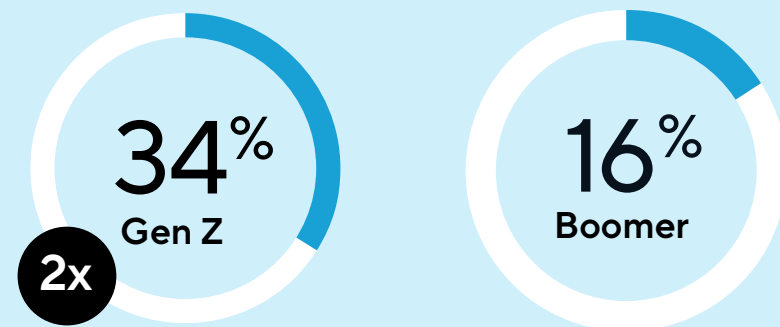
37% of workers feel completely safe at their workplace.



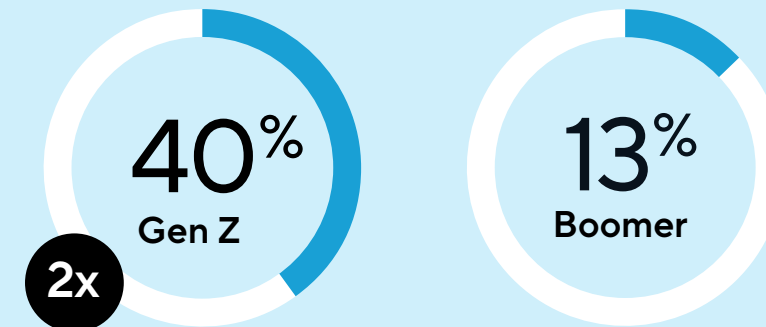


Those differences are also stark across generational lines.

Gen Z is consistently 2x more concerned about safety than their Boomer counterparts.



Gen Z **feels more than 2x unsafe in the workplace** than Boomers.



Gen Z is **2x more likely to have felt threatened by customers or clients** who come into their workplace than Boomers.



Gen Z is **2x more likely to say they often feel unsafe** at work than Boomers.

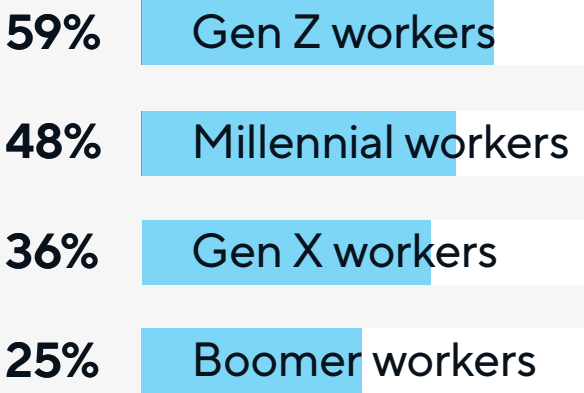


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The discrepancies are even wider when it comes to concerns about active shooter scenarios.



Workers reporting concern about active shooter scenarios at work, by generation.



42% of Gen Z believes that security at their workplace is more focused on protecting inventory than them.



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Elevated levels of concern among younger generations are not unfounded – Gen Z and Millennials report more life threatening encounters at work.

**33% of Gen Z and 30% of Millennial workers said they have encountered situations at work where their life was endangered.**

Meanwhile, just 15% and 6% of Gen X and Boomer workers, respectively, have reported the same.





Younger workers will take action to prioritize their safety if employers won't. **More than 30% of Gen Z workers** say they **have turned down job opportunities** or switched jobs **because they've felt vulnerable or at an increased level of risk**, while 1 in 4 Millennial workers say they have switched jobs due to safety concerns.



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Ensuring workers are physically secure is an urgent business need.

More than half of frontline workers who feel that their jobs do not prioritize employees’ physical safety have said they plan to leave in the next year if their employer does not act to improve safety.

Workers who say they are likely to resign in the next 12 months if physical safety in the workplace does not improve soon.



**54% of healthcare workers 41% of hospitality industry workers and 37% of retail workers say they are likely to resign in the next 12 months if physical safety in the workplace does not improve soon.**



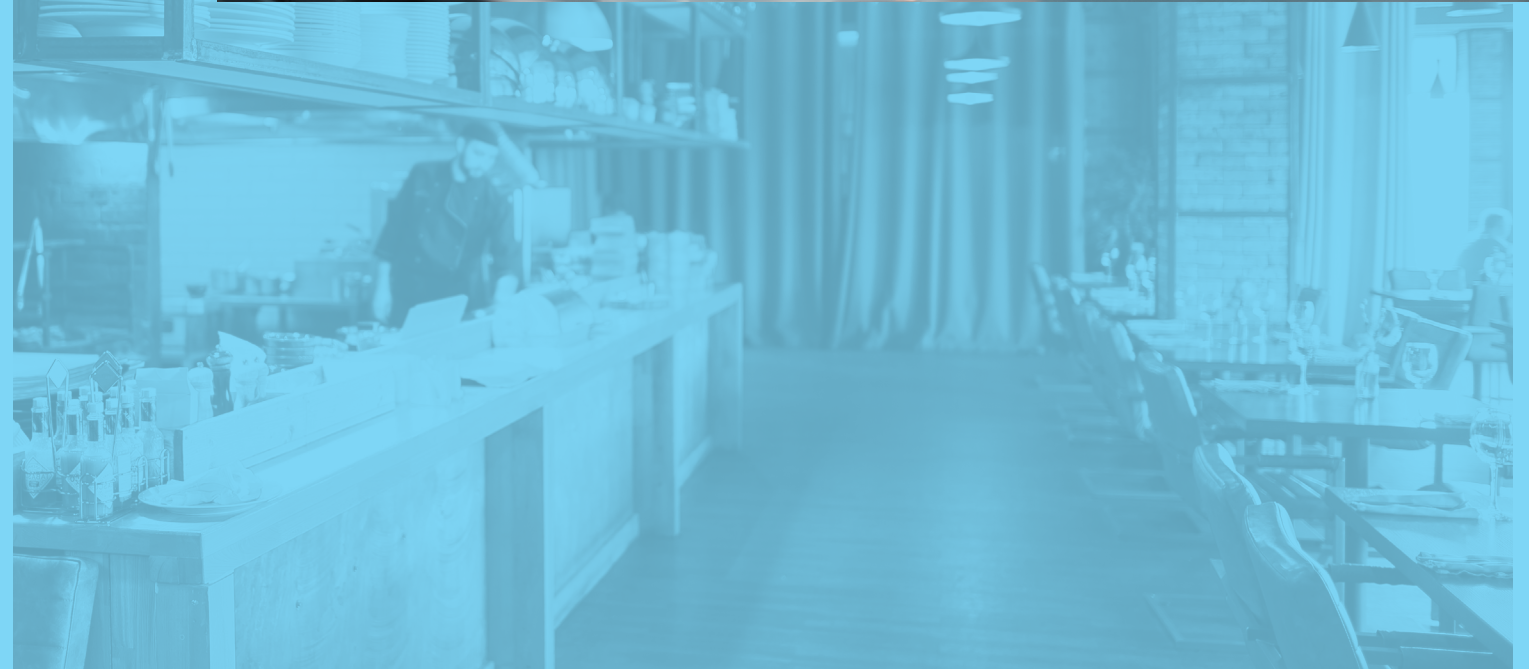


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Left unaddressed, employers could see more staff walk away.

Two in three frontline workers would quit their job due to safety concerns if they could afford to.

While 86% of employers say that physical security of employees is a priority, only 23% of employers consider the physical security of their employees as their number one priority.





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Workers surveyed opened up about rising violence and how it impacts them.

“Customers have become more aggressive since the price of food has gone up.”



“I have watched many of my coworkers be attacked by our patients in the last year and nothing has been changed by our management.”



## 2023 Verkada Workplace Safety Survey

# A wakeup call for employers.

Amid rising concerns about physical safety in the workplace, employees are seeking more from their employers – 2 in 3 workers want to see increased security measures put into practice at work. Now is the time for businesses to meet these essential needs.

Our research reveals an increasingly fragile and fraught environment for our frontline workforce. Our nurses, teachers, cashiers, and so many other workers who serve in critical roles interacting with the public are enduring unprecedented levels of threat and stress every time they show up to work. Employers need to address these alarming trends and ensure that the safety of their people is not just a priority, but the number one priority. The moment to come together and drive action around the systems and practices to make employee safety the top operations priority in every workplace is now.





## Survey Methodology and Objectives

The 2023 Workplace Safety Study is a research study commissioned by Verkada. A nationally representative sample of 1,000 Americans who work on-location across critical sectors - including healthcare, retail, consumer banking, hospitality and services - were surveyed online leveraging Cint's global digital insights platform.

In addition to working on-site, all respondents were screened to ensure job responsibilities included regular contact with patients, customers, clients and/or guests, in addition to colleagues. An equal breakdown of employers and employees were surveyed, segmented by job title, level and managerial responsibility. The study examines worker attitudes, priorities, and concerns pertaining to physical safety and security in the workplace. The study was fielded in March 2023, and designed in collaboration with independent market research consultants at Method + Mode.