

Boxing Day & Crowd Control



Boxing Day is coming soon and with it crowds of shoppers looking for great deals. Unfortunately, unruly shoppers can endanger workers in retail stores and shopping centres.

In fact, four years ago, on so-called 'Black Friday,' a prime shopping day after Thanksgiving in the US, a Wal-Mart worker was crushed to death by a stampede of bargain-crazed shoppers. The store was fined \$7,000 for failing to address the risk of stampeding crowds looking for holiday bargains, which was a known hazard. It's appealing that fine.

So if your workplace is in the retail industry, consider implementing crowd management measures for Boxing Day.

[OSHA](#), the key workplace safety regulator in the US, released guidelines for addressing crowd control hazards. For example, when planning the event, retailers should do the following:

- Where large crowds are expected, hire additional staff as needed and have trained security or crowd management personnel or police officers on site.
- Create a detailed staffing plan that designates a location for each worker. Based on the size of the crowd expected, determine the number of workers that are needed in various locations to ensure the safety of the event, such as near the door entrances and throughout the store.
- Ensure that workers are properly trained to manage the event.

- Make sure the event site meets all public safety requirements. And ensure that all permits and licenses are obtained and that local emergency services, including the local police, fire department and hospital, are aware of the event.
- Designate a worker to contact local emergency responders if necessary.
- Designate a store manager to make key decisions as needed during the event.
- Provide legible and visible signs that describe entrance and exit locations, store opening times, and other important information, such as the location of major sale items and restrooms.
- Prepare an emergency plan that addresses potential dangers facing workers, including overcrowding, crowd crushing, being struck by the crowd, violent acts and fire. Share this emergency plan with all local public safety agencies.
- Train workers in crowd management procedures and the emergency plan. Give them an opportunity to practice the special event plan. Include local public safety agencies if appropriate.