



The state of U.S. retail worker safety

2024 survey and report



The state of U.S. retail worker safety

Safety and security remain critical for the retail industry, with one in four workers considering leaving their jobs because of safety concerns.

Despite the well-documented effects of the pandemic and accelerated growth in e-commerce, the retail industry remains the [largest U.S. private sector employer](#), according to a recent report from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the National Retail Federation, responsible for more than one in every four private sector jobs in the country.

Safety and security remain a major focus in and around the industry, the news is [littered](#) with [reports](#) of state and local police efforts to [curtail](#) retail crime. In fact, calling police or other public safety officials to stores is at least a monthly occurrence for many workers (**49%**), according to an independent research study conducted on behalf of Motorola Solutions, a global leader in public safety and enterprise security. The study found that one in four retail workers (**29%**) has considered leaving their job because of safety concerns.

Policymakers are starting to listen: [California](#) and [New York](#) – two of the states with the most retail employees – are

among [those](#) legislatively addressing organized retail crime and employee security. In addition, bipartisan legislation on this topic was introduced in Congress in 2023.

Motorola Solutions is listening too. Its annual survey of more than 1,000 U.S. retail associates and managers aims to better understand their feelings about safety and the security measures that could make a difference.

The results provide valuable insights into the everyday realities of retail workers and highlight areas for evaluation and advancement within the sector.



Retail front

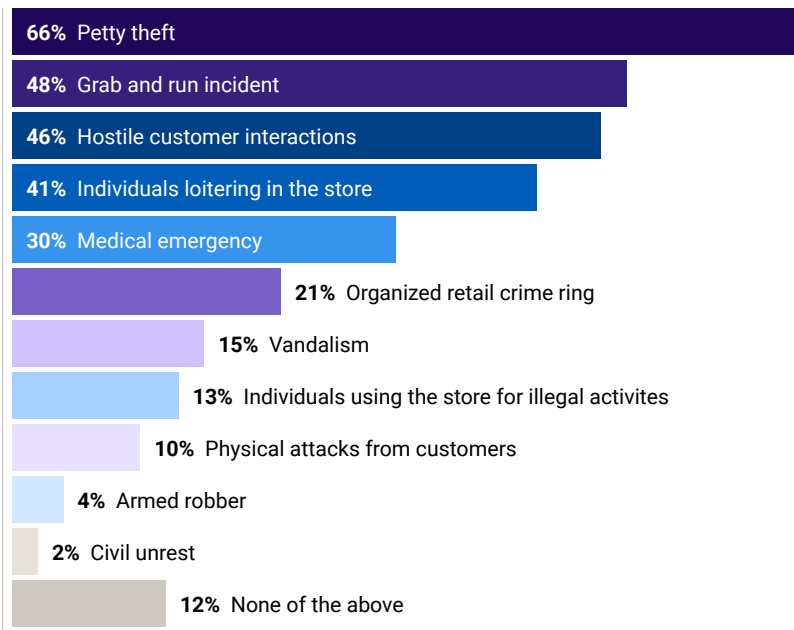
How crime is impacting workplace safety

What do retail workers say they see inside their stores? Nearly half of respondents (**49%**) said that police, EMS or fire officials are called to their stores at least once per month, with **21%** saying this occurs on an at-least-weekly basis.

As for crime, petty theft was the most-cited issue respondents have experienced in the last year (**66%**), followed by grab and run incidents (**48%**) and threatening or abusive customer interactions (**46%**). Retail employees continue to report that these incidents are increasing, with more than half (**51%**) pointing to petty theft as on the rise.

Forty-five percent of respondents said they're concerned for the safety of shoppers. Crime is likely to blame, as those who reported feeling concerned also reported experiencing more crime overall.

Have you or your store experienced any of these situations onsite in the past 12 months?



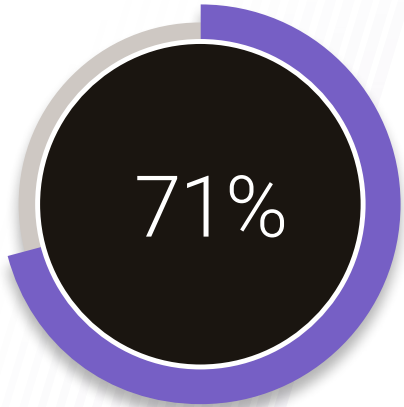
Note: Respondents could select multiple options.





Many factors impact how safe retail workers feel at work, including the technology solutions deployed at their stores. The presence of video security cameras tops the list at **71%** for retail workers regardless of what type of store they work at. From dollar stores, to clothing, grocery and department stores, workers reported a need for cameras to increase feelings of safety. An increasing number of workers pointed to access control systems (**35%**), license plate readers (**32%**), panic buttons (**32%**) and body cameras (**20%**) as favorable factors as it relates to feeling safer.

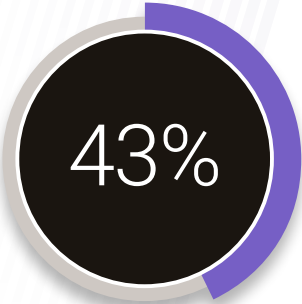
What factors impact how safe you feel at work?



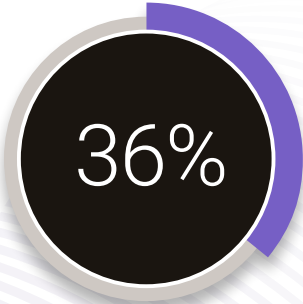
Video security cameras

Safety and security goes beyond what’s happening in the store. Respondents highlighted that they are concerned for their safety when arriving or leaving work outside of daylight hours (**43%**), followed by concerns when being in the parking lot at work (**36%**).

When do you feel concern for your safety at work?



arriving or leaving work outside daylight hours



in the parking lot





Holiday shopping

Busy season brings extra stress

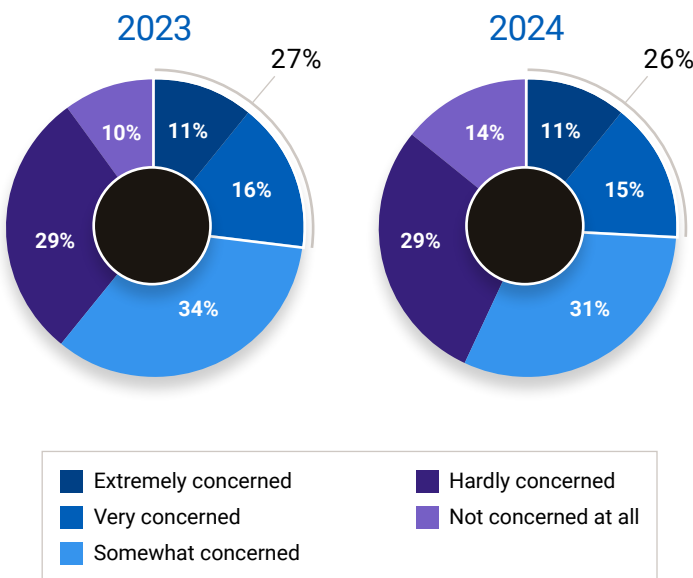
Retail workers become significantly more concerned about their personal safety at work when thinking about the holiday shopping season. While **74%** said that they ordinarily feel safe at work, that figure sharply contrasts with the **57%** who said that they are concerned for their personal safety heading into peak shopping season.

More than two-thirds (**67%**) of those surveyed expect their store to be short-staffed during the holiday season. Since adequate staffing levels significantly impact how safe workers feel, it's understandable that they are more worried about safety during the busy holiday season when they anticipate being short-staffed. Those who reported going

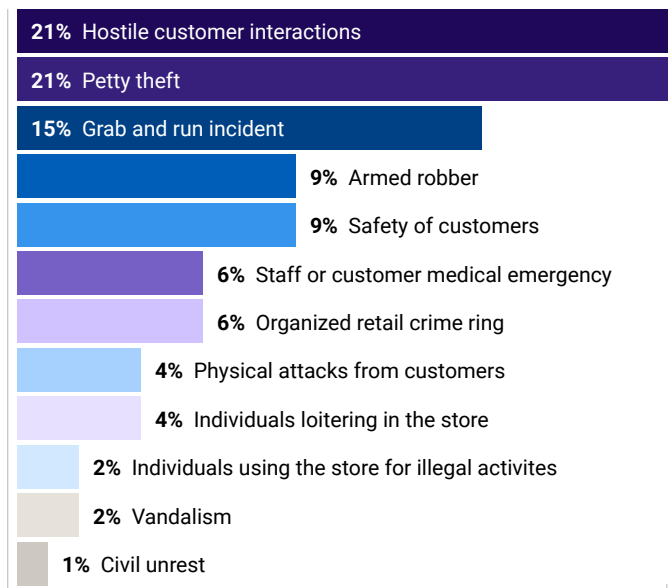
into the holidays understaffed were more likely to report feeling less safe overall.

The top three safety concerns respondents cited around holiday shopping are petty theft and hostile customer interactions, tied at **21%**, and grab-and-run incidents at **15%**.

How concerned are you for your personal safety at work leading into peak shopping season?



Top ranked - what are your top 3 safety concerns going into the holiday shopping season?





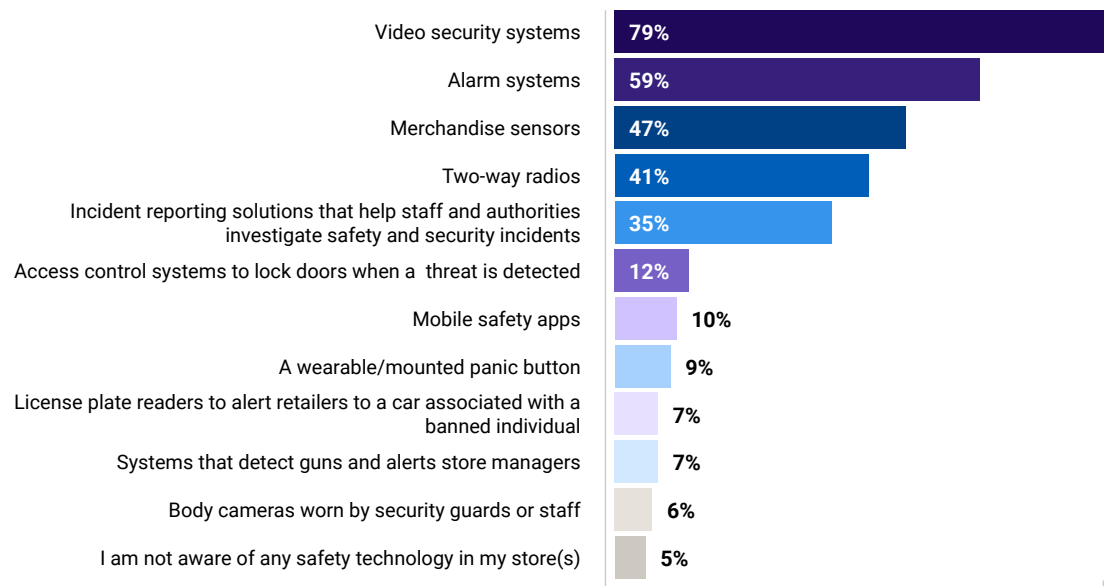
Workplace safety

How retailers can help employees feel safer

A majority of respondents said that their stores have video security systems (**79%**) and alarm systems (**59%**) in place, which parallels measures retail workers said make them feel safer.

Roughly three in 10 respondents (**32%**) said that their employer has introduced new security measures in the last year. The changes employers have made line up with some of employees' concerns: Increased emergency preparedness and response training was the most frequently cited addition (**54%**). Other top changes include more timely communications about in-store incidents (**46%**), deploying new or enhanced technology (**30%**) and increasing staffing (**30%**). The latter two - along with emergency preparedness - are factors that employees cited as important to increasing their own feelings of safety.

What types of safety technology do you use in your store?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.

“Several industry studies have shown that retail crime is evolving – it has become more organized, coordinated and, importantly, more violent. Violence is a key concern among nearly every loss prevention leader we work with, and the changing nature of retail crime is driving them to search for innovative solutions that can help keep people safe. Safety is the most fundamental thing any business must provide their employees and customers – if they can’t keep people safe, they can’t keep them coming back to work or shop.”

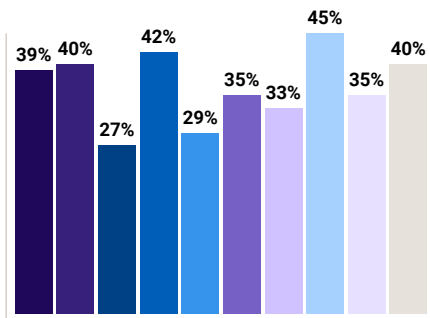
– Cory Lowe, Ph.D., director of research at the Loss Prevention Research Council



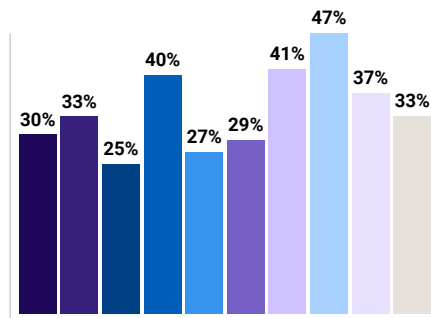
With more than one-third of employees feeling unsafe in the parking lot and even more feeling unsafe when getting to or leaving work outside of daylight hours, technology can play a role in easing safety concerns for employees entering and leaving their buildings. Workers said a few measures could help, specifically, gun detection systems (49%), license plate readers (39%) and mobile safety apps (39%). More than half (55%) who reported feeling unsafe in those situations said their workplaces do not have video security cameras, which can be placed in and outside the building.

What types of safety technology would make you feel safer at work?

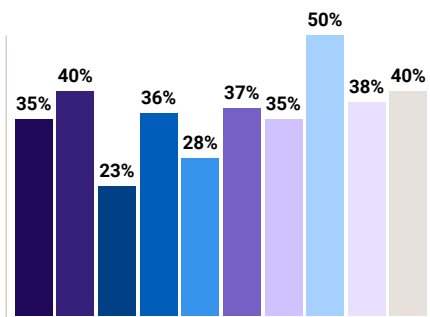
When walking to or around your retail store



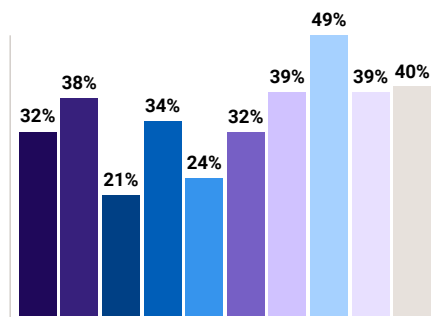
When commuting to work on public transportation



When in the parking lot at work



When arriving or departing outside daytime hours



- Alarm system
- A wearable/mounted panic button
- Merchandise sensors
- Video security systems
- Body cameras
- Two-way radios
- Mobile safety apps
- Systems that detect guns and alert management if someone walks in holding a weapon
- License plate readers to alert retailers to a car associated with a banned individual
- Access control systems to lock doors when threats are detected

Note: Respondents could select multiple options.





Body cameras

The emerging retail safety tool

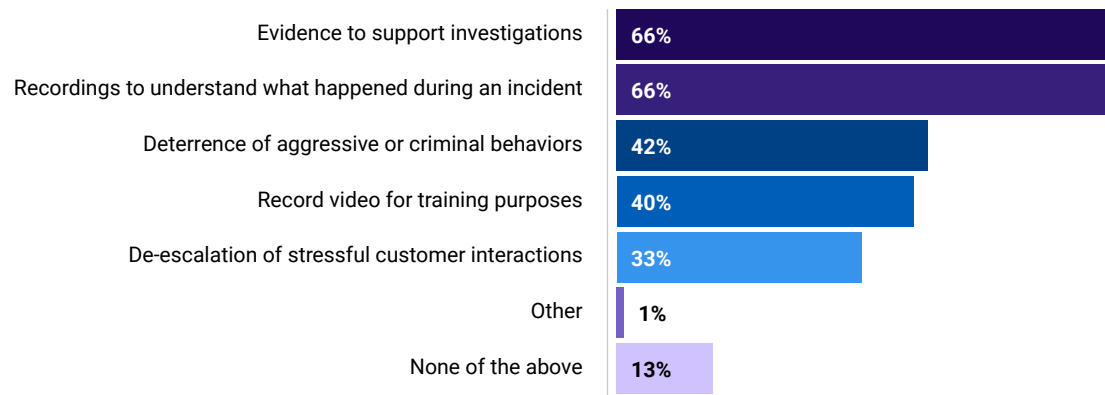
Body cameras are an increasingly popular tool in retail security. In the U.S., more than one-third of retailers in the National Retail Federation’s 2023 security survey said that they were investigating body cameras for workers. **Forty-seven percent** of employees in this survey said that this technology would make them feel safer, while **25%** said they aren’t sure.

However, the technology has higher adoption rates abroad, and **70%** of retail workers surveyed in a comparable study from Motorola Solutions in the U.K. said body cameras are effective in preventing and de-escalating dangerous situations. This sentiment is echoed by the Central England Co-op, a U.K. based retailer, [which said the roll out of body cameras helped employees feel safer](#) and provided another deterrent to prevent crimes.

The majority of U.S. respondents said body cameras could provide evidence to support investigations (**66%**) and that the recordings could help people understand what occurred during an incident (also **66%**).

These devices can serve as a force-multiplier for retail workers, addressing their desire for more staff and more technology while potentially deterring aggressive customers and shoplifters alike.

What do you consider to be the value of body cameras for retail staff?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.

“Retailers are increasingly seeking durable, high-performance solutions that not only aid in loss prevention but also provide critical protection for staff against aggressive or hostile behaviors, enhancing both security and workplace safety. The use of body-worn cameras in the retail sector is projected to experience significant growth, with the global market expected to double in size between 2022 and 2027.”

– Paul Bremner, principal research analyst at Omdia



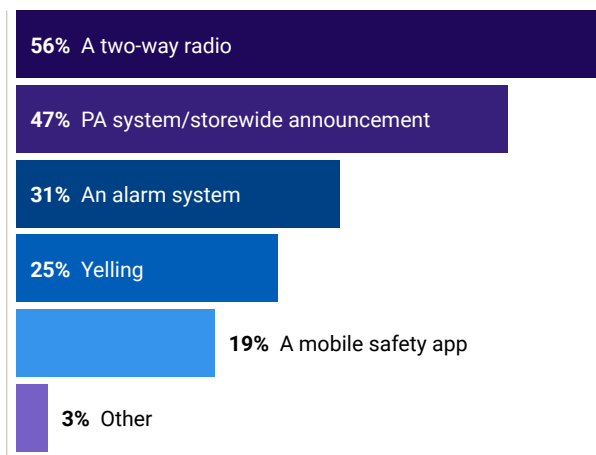
Responding to a crisis

How technology can help

Retail workers are increasingly able to leverage technology when incidents occur in stores. A majority of workers said that they can alert all of their coworkers instantly when needed (**63%**) and use two-way radios to instantly notify onsite co-workers when a safety situation arises (**56%**), up from **51%** last year. Alarm systems are also slightly more widespread, with 31% using them, up from 27% in 2023.

Overall, two-thirds of those surveyed said more could be done to keep them and their coworkers safe. This is an area where technological solutions can efficiently help address their concerns: **41%** said they would feel safer if their store employed systems to detect handguns and alert management and/or security, and **35%** pointed to access control systems that allow employees to automatically lock doors when faced with threats.

If an incident occurs in your store, how are you able to instantly notify all co-workers onsite?



Note: Respondents could select multiple options.





Conclusion

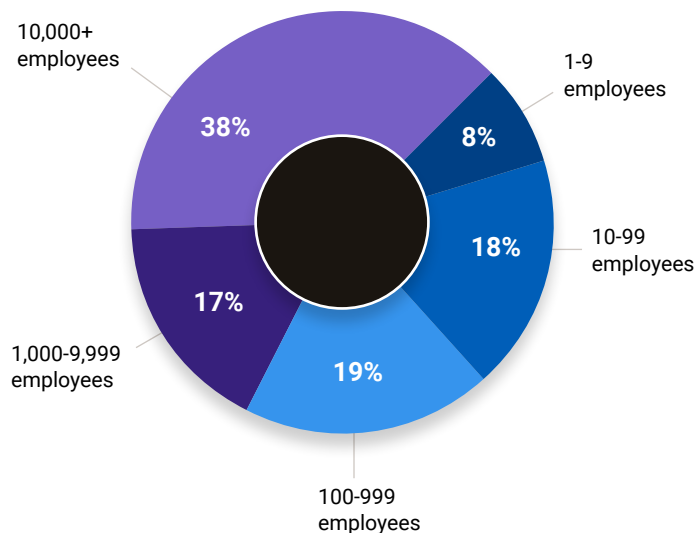
U.S. retail workers are navigating an increasingly dangerous environment. From hostile customer interactions to organized crime, the challenges are significant, and heading into the holiday season, there's a greater concern for safety. However, by embracing modern security technologies and taking a proactive approach to safety, retailers can help create a safer environment for their workers - and shoppers alike.

Methodology

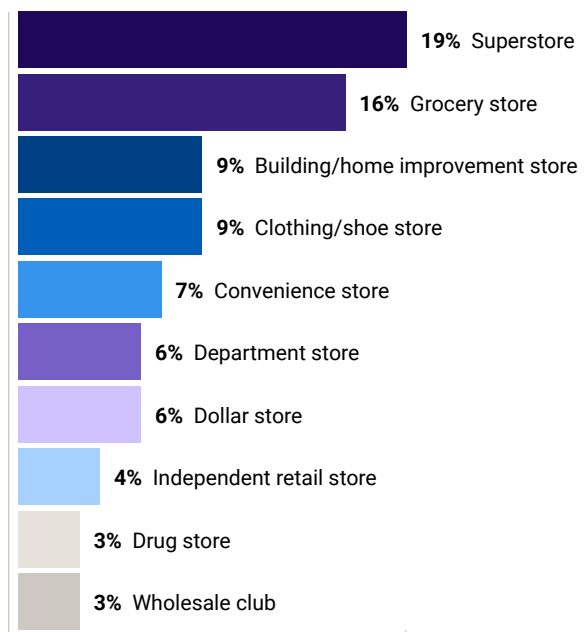
The independent market research firm Researchscape conducted this survey. Respondents were 1,322 full- and part-time U.S. retail employees. The survey was conducted in **September 2024** and results were weighted to be representative of the overall U.S. population.

Similar surveys from Motorola Solutions were conducted in the same timeframe in the [U.K.](#) and [Australia and New Zealand](#).

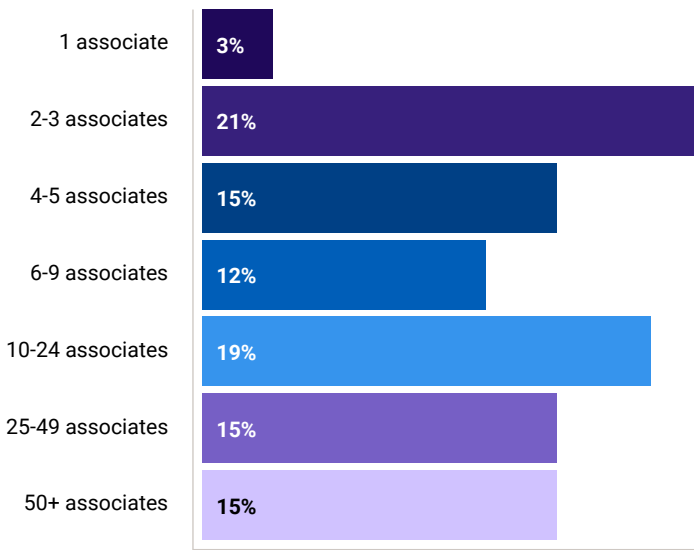
Approximately how many employees work at your organization?



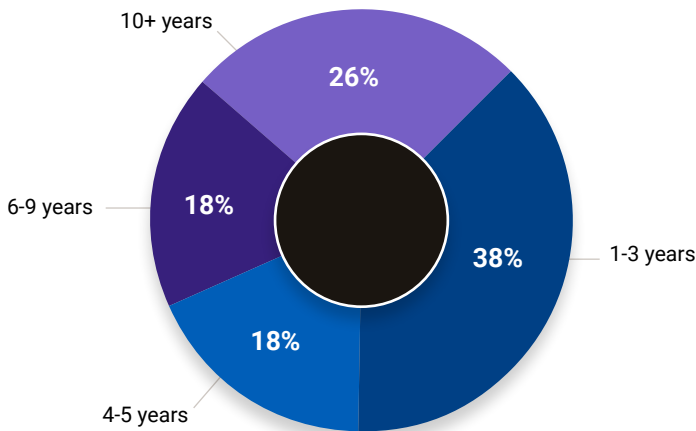
What type of store do you work at?



How many associates are staffed on the same shift?



How long have you worked for your current employer?

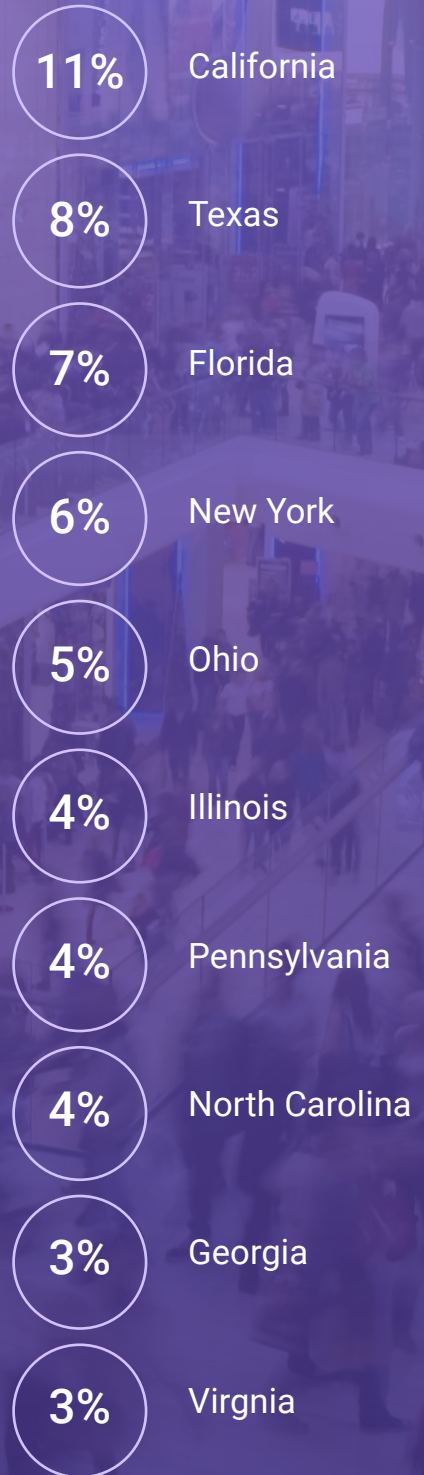


About Motorola Solutions

Motorola Solutions is solving for safer. We build and connect technologies to help protect people, property and places. Our solutions enable the collaboration between public safety agencies and enterprises that's critical for a proactive approach to safety and security. Learn more about how we're solving for safer communities, safer schools, safer hospitals, safer businesses – safer everywhere – at www.motorolasolutions.com.



Which state, district, or territory do you live in?





To learn more, visit:
www.motorolasolutions.com



Motorola Solutions, Inc. 500 West Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60661 U.S.A. motorolasolutions.com

MOTOROLA, MOTO, MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS and the Stylized M Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Motorola Trademark Holdings, LLC and are used under license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2024 Motorola Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved. 11-2024 [BG07]