



Littler

Powering the Future Workplace

The 2026 Regional Employer Conference

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL EMPLOYER | Carlsbad, CA | NOVEMBER 12, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

California Legal Update

Employment law continues to evolve at a rapid pace, making it critical for employers to stay ahead of new legal developments and compliance obligations. This timely session will highlight the most significant California and federal employment law developments from 2026, including key court decisions, legislative changes, and regulatory trends, while also providing a forward-looking overview of new California laws and compliance requirements taking effect in 2027. Our panel of experienced Littler attorneys will offer practical guidance and actionable takeaways to help employers prepare for the year ahead.

Speakers:

[Samuel Richman](#), [Carrie A. Stringham](#), [Sara A. Zimmerman](#)

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Spotlight Session | Debunking the Myths of Employee Handbooks

Employee handbooks are among an employer's most important compliance tools, yet they are often misunderstood, out-of-date or even misused. In this interactive spotlight session, we'll debunk the top five myths surrounding employee handbooks and explore best practices for drafting, updating and enforcing policies in today's evolving workplace. Through live polling questions and real-world examples, attendees will be challenged to rethink common assumptions, such as how often handbooks should be reviewed, whether old policies still hold up and the growing role of artificial intelligence in handbook drafting.

Speakers:

[James A. Becerra](#), [Maria R. Harrington](#)

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Break



10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Leave and Accommodation Challenges: An Interactive Discussion

Employers are navigating an increasingly complex landscape of leave and accommodation obligations as legal requirements continue to evolve under California and federal law. This interactive session will feature a practical discussion of some of the most challenging workplace issues involving the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, disability accommodations, and California's expanding protections for employees who use medical cannabis.

Through audience polling, hypothetical scenarios, and real-world examples, attendees will be asked to evaluate common leave and accommodation requests and consider how employers can meet their obligations while maintaining operational effectiveness. Participants will gain practical insights into how these overlapping legal frameworks intersect and strategies for approaching leave and accommodation decisions consistently, compliantly, and defensibly in today's workplace.

Speakers:

[Kyra A. Buch](#), [Merrili Escue](#), [Leah E. Peterson](#)

11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Spotlight Session | Future of Work: Employee Demand for Flexibility, Resistance to Monitoring and Resulting Compliance Conundrums

Three forces are colliding: employees demanding more flexibility related to when, where, and how they work; employers layering on monitoring and productivity-tracking tools to manage that flexibility at scale; and a fast-growing body of state law — plus employees' own resistance — treating that monitoring as a legal and cultural liability rather than a neutral management tool. This spotlight will address:

- How these tools can quietly create wage-and-hour exposure, as activity logs and "active hours" tracking can become evidence of off-the-clock work
- Emerging and varying protections at the state and federal level
- Employee trust or distrust, which can drive privacy litigation, organizing activity, and attrition among employees who feel watched rather than supported

Speakers:

[Britney N.D. Torres](#)

12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The Rise of the AI Employee: When Workers Become Their Own Advocates and Litigants

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into the workplace, employers face new challenges in managing employee use of AI tools and responding to workplace disputes influenced by AI-generated content. Employees are now using AI to draft performance reviews, make accommodation requests, submit internal grievances, conduct legal research, and support self-represented claims, creating new considerations for employers and counsel.

Join our presenters for an engaging discussion on emerging employment trends, practical management strategies, and litigation risks associated with employee AI use. The session will explore best practices for workplace policies, documenting employment decisions, responding to AI-assisted claims, and addressing AI-generated legal filings while maintaining effective communication and strategic



litigation practices.

Speakers:

[Allison Borkenheim](#), [Grace Waddell](#), [Miko Sargizian](#)

2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Spotlight Session | Back to Basics: Existing Tools to Navigate the Future of Cal/OSHA Compliance

The future of workplace safety may look different, but the path to compliance still starts with the basics. This session will examine how foundational Cal/OSHA requirements, including hazard assessments, IIPPs, heat illness prevention plans, and workplace violence prevention plans, can help employers prepare for emerging risks. From artificial intelligence and automation to increasing incidents of workplace violence and extreme heat, attendees will learn how to use existing safety management systems to navigate the next generation of workplace safety challenges.

Speakers:

[Kimberly M. Shappley](#), [Sean Kearney](#)

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Break

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Investigations Workshop: Strategic Considerations for Employers

The need to implement robust response procedures and conduct effective and lawful workplace investigations remains a critical piece of an employer's compliance obligations. For many employers, the shift to hybrid and remote work and utilizing video conferencing provides an opportunity to expand an investigator's efficiency but also poses challenges regarding effective interviewing and information-gathering techniques. This year, Littler's investigations program goes beyond lecturing, providing participants with a unique interactive approach and an opportunity to both benchmark and get hands-on experience with the challenges of responding to allegations of workplace misconduct. Participants will explore witness interview and information-gathering techniques in an extensive interactive segment with hands-on, skill-building opportunities. Participants will receive feedback from colleagues and experienced Littler attorney-facilitators regarding investigation and response strategies that address current workplace conditions.

Speakers:

[Alyssa S. Gjested](#), [Nolan McCready](#), [Sandra J. McMullan](#)