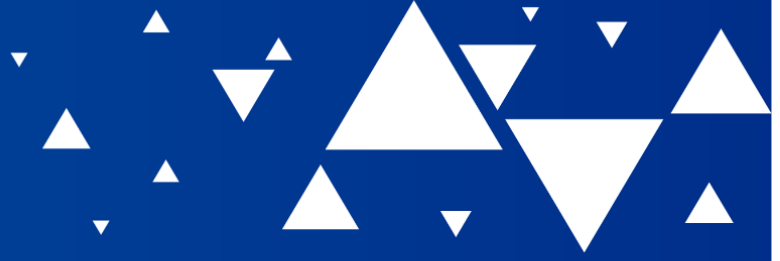




JCRC
BAY AREA



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR JEWISH EMPLOYEES

On Saturday, October 7, an unprecedented terrorist attack was launched by Hamas against Israeli civilians in Southern Israel—the deadliest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. As the war continues to unfold, tragically, there will be many more civilian casualties in Gaza and Israel.

Jews are a tiny minority (0.2 percent of the world population) and approximately half of them live in Israel. Consequently, the impact of these events has been felt by Jews around the world, including in the Bay Area, as many have family, friends, and loved ones who live in the regions attacked and who are directly in harm's way. Graphic images and videos taken and shared by Hamas terrorists of Israelis who were murdered, tortured, raped, and kidnapped are being circulated on social media.

We are reaching out to suggest some ways you can create space for those who may need support. First and foremost, it's important to remember that this is not about politics – this is about people. Your Jewish employees may be experiencing grief and trauma, and the way you discuss this subject, and ensure their safety and sense of belonging, is paramount at this time.

What Employers can do:

1. **Share a message of care and support** to Jewish employees internally **and share resources** (we provide a list below).
 - Please note: To ensure your Jewish employees feel seen and heard, it is important to name what happened to Israelis directly and not simply say a war or conflict broke out.
 - This attack was a deliberate and brutal massacre of hundreds of civilians—including babies, children and the elderly—on a Jewish holy day by Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization.
 - For example, [here is the story](#) of what unfolded in one of many small communities across Southern Israel.
 - It is possible to send this clear and supportive message, while still showing empathy for the civilian loss of life in Gaza. But we strongly caution against making a moral equivalency between the actions of a terrorist organization and the response by the Israeli military to protect its people.
2. **Create a safe space for impacted employees** to gather and get support from one another. Allow for appropriate use of bereavement leave or similar PTO policies.
3. **For employees that may be feeling overwhelmed**, you may refer them to the Jewish Family & Children's Services Bay Area Critical Helpline at 415-449-3700.

4. **Protect all employees** from harassment and/or discrimination, as legally required.
5. **Workplace Slack, Teams and other communication channels are not the place to debate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.** Please provide guidelines to employees about appropriate use and send a clear message that antisemitism or any other form of hate will not be tolerated. This includes supporting or celebrating the actions by Hamas against Israeli citizens.
6. **It's ok to acknowledge that you don't have all (or any) of the answers.** Listening is a powerful tool to create a supportive environment.

Key facts:

1. [Hamas](#) is an internationally recognized terrorist organization funded, in part, by the Iranian regime. Its charter expressly calls for the destruction of the State of Israel.
2. The unprovoked attack was largely on civilians, including a music festival where over 260 attendees were murdered. Hamas has taken over 150 hostages and is threatening to execute them unless Israel stops its military response.
3. Previous violence in Israel has been linked to a [sharp increase](#) in antisemitism in the United States.
4. ADL reported that 2022 marked the [highest level](#) of antisemitic incidents in the U.S. since they began tracking in 1979.

Example statements of support:

1. [Statement](#) by NBA, NBPA
2. [Statement](#) by NFL
3. [Statement](#) by MLB
4. [Pledge](#) by JPMorgan CEO Jamine Daimon
5. [Press release](#) by Jefferies Financial Group
6. [Statement](#) by Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla

Resources for further reading/workplace education:

1. [JCRC Bay Area Workshop on Understanding Jewish Identity and Antisemitism](#)
2. [ADL Resources and Statements](#)
3. [Here I Am](#): A video storytelling resource about antisemitism and Jewish identity
4. [U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#).

Employer Legal Responsibilities:

There are laws and regulations on workplace discrimination that protect Jews based on their religious beliefs and their ethnicity. This includes protection against discrimination targeting the deep religious and ethnic connection to the modern state of Israel, which is an essential element of Jewish identity for many Jews. Current or former Israeli citizens are additionally protected from national origin discrimination.

Employers are responsible for protecting their Jewish employees from hateful rhetoric/conduct and affording their Jewish employees the same opportunities offered to employees of other ethnic identities to come together as an employee resource or affinity group, access crisis counseling and other assistance, and receive public expressions of support during traumatic public events.

This JCRC Bay Area resource was adapted from a guide developed by [Shine A Light](#).