

Compliance Training for the Retail Industry: A Guide for Learning Leaders

What retail learning leaders need to know to strengthen compliance and safety training across locations, roles, and regulations.

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Retail compliance gets complicated quickly.

Different locations. Different roles. Federal, state, and local requirements. Seasonal employees. Customer data. Workplace safety. Constant turnover.

And when critical training falls through the cracks, the consequences can extend far beyond a missed completion. When training matters most, you can't afford to get it wrong.

This guide will help you understand where compliance and safety training commonly shows up across retail operations, identify potential gaps in your current program, and assess whether your workforce has the training it needs when it matters.



OSHA estimates employers collectively pay about \$1 billion per week in direct workers' compensation costs alone.

Source: [OSHA, 2025](#)

Before you begin

This guide is intended as an educational resource and should not be considered legal advice. Compliance requirements vary by state, industry, role, and operating environment. Organizations should review applicable federal, state, and local requirements and consult legal or compliance professionals when appropriate.



Compliance protects the brand. Learning prepares the people behind it.

Where compliance shows up in a retail workday



STARTING THE JOB

Potential training needs

Workplace policies

Harassment prevention

Safety fundamentals

Code of conduct

Role-specific requirements

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

A new employee knows what's expected before encountering a situation on the job.



OPENING THE STORE

Potential training needs

Safety checks

Emergency procedures

Store security

Hazard identification

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

An employee identifies a hazard before it becomes an incident.



SERVING CUSTOMERS

Potential training needs

Accessibility

Workplace conduct

Customer privacy

Difficult or threatening situations

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

An employee responds appropriately when a customer or workplace interaction becomes difficult.



HANDLING PAYMENTS AND CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Potential training needs

Payment security

Customer privacy

Fraud awareness

Phishing and cybersecurity

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

An employee recognizes suspicious activity before information or money is compromised.



WORKING ON THE FLOOR OR IN THE STOCKROOM

Potential training needs

Slips, trips, and falls

Safe lifting

Ergonomics

Equipment safety

Incident reporting

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

An employee recognizes an unsafe condition and knows what to do next.



SUPPORTING THE TEAM

Potential training needs

Harassment prevention

Workplace violence prevention

Ethical conduct

Manager responsibilities

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

A manager knows how to respond when an employee raises a concern.



CLOSING THE STORE

Potential training needs

Cash handling

Store security

Incident reporting

Emergency procedures

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS:

Employees follow the right procedures even when staffing is light and the store is busy.

Every day in retail is made up of hundreds of decisions. Some take seconds. Others shape how employees feel on the job and how customers experience your brand. Compliance training prepares employees to make both kinds of decisions consistently and responsibly.

Training has to work beyond completion.

The real test comes when an employee
has seconds to decide what to do next.



// If an injury occurs at a location, we assign safety training to both the employee and their manager to prevent future occurrences. This approach helps build a safer work environment.

Priscilla McCraney
Director of Training and Employee Development
[Goodwill Industries of Southern Arizona](#)

Key retail compliance requirements at a glance

No two retail organizations have identical requirements. Your compliance training needs will vary by location, the role employees perform, and what you sell. The following areas commonly appear in retail compliance and workplace training programs.

Workplace safety

Help employees recognize hazards, prevent injuries, and respond appropriately when incidents occur.

Common topics include:

- OSHA workplace safety
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Fire prevention and emergency procedures
- Safe lifting and ergonomics
- Incident reporting



Helpful resource

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

Harassment, conduct, and workplace violence

Employees represent your organization every day.

Training should reinforce a culture of respect, ethical decision-making, and appropriate workplace behavior.

Common topics include:

- Harassment prevention
- Workplace violence prevention
- Ethics and code of conduct
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
- Respectful workplace practices



Helpful resource

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

Cybersecurity, payments, and customer data

IBM reported the global average cost of a data breach reached \$4.88 million in 2024.

Retail employees routinely interact with payment systems, customer information, email, devices, and other potential entry points for security threats.

Training helps reinforce responsible data handling and security awareness.

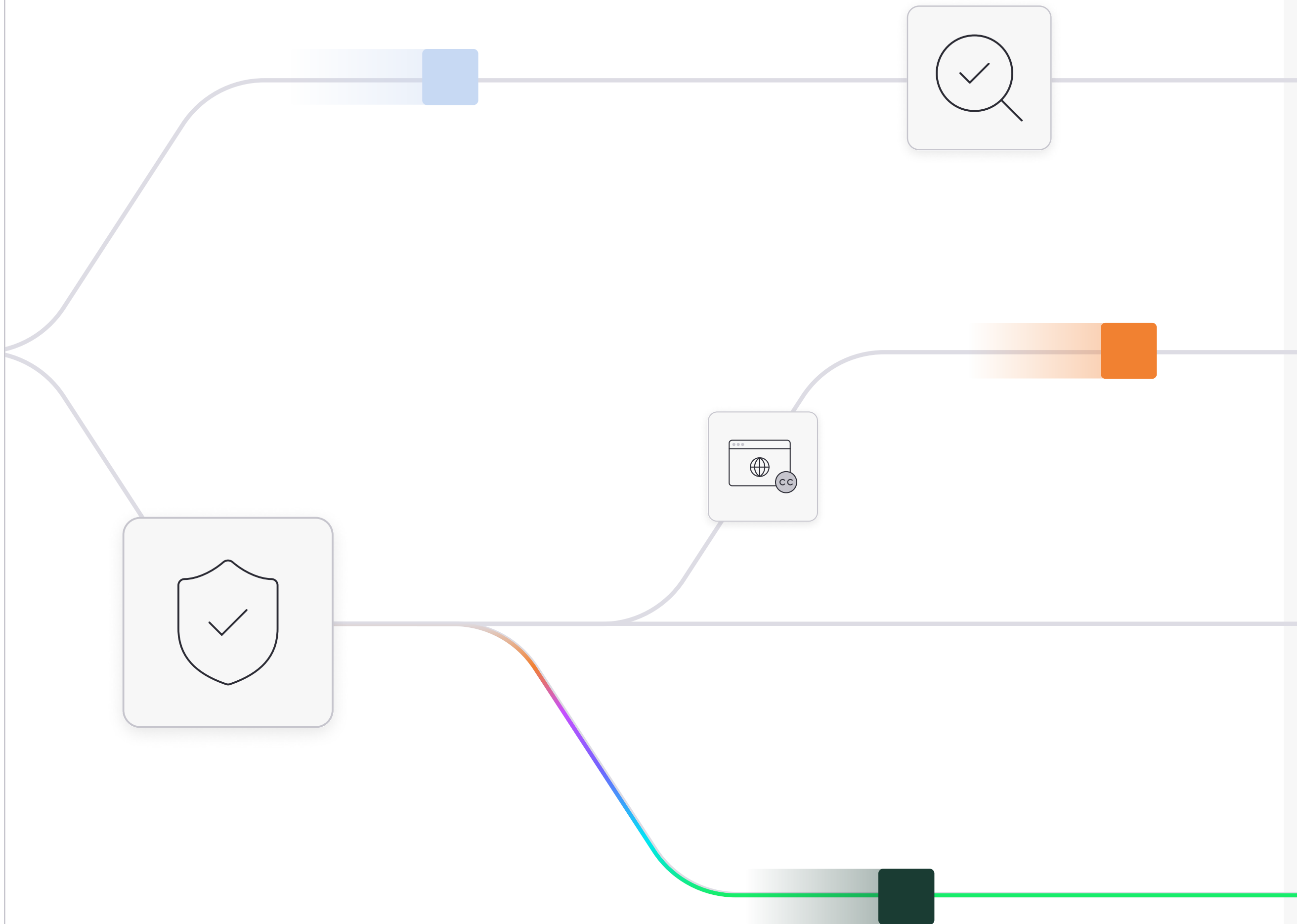
Common topics include:

- Cybersecurity awareness
- Phishing prevention
- Customer privacy
- Data protection
- Payment card security
- Fraud awareness



Helpful resource

[Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\); PCI Security Standards Council](#)



Store security and operations

Many retail organizations also include training that supports consistent daily operations.

Examples include:

- Cash handling
- Loss prevention
- Store security
- Incident response
- Returns and refunds
- Emergency procedures

Food safety (where applicable)

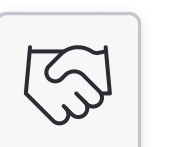
For retailers that prepare, handle, or sell food, additional requirements may apply.

Common topics include:

- Safe food handling
- Personal hygiene
- Sanitation
- Temperature control
- Allergen awareness

Common gaps in retail compliance programs

A lack of commitment doesn't cause most compliance gaps. They happen when complexity makes consistency difficult to maintain. As organizations grow, small gaps can become larger risks.



Inconsistent training across locations

Different stores develop different habits, making it harder to deliver consistent experiences for employees and customers.

Different requirements across roles and locations

Training requirements can vary by role, state, and jurisdiction, making it difficult to know whether every employee is getting the training they need.

Rushed onboarding

Employees need to contribute quickly, but critical compliance and safety topics can be missed when onboarding is inconsistent.

Outdated content

Regulations, policies, technology, and workplace risks change. Training needs to keep pace.

Seasonal and part-time workforces

Different schedules, locations, and employment types make consistent learning more difficult.

Fragmented reporting

Training records spread across multiple systems make tracking completion and documenting compliance more challenging.

Language and accessibility barriers

Training should be understandable, accessible, and available in formats that meet the needs of today's workforce.

Training feels separate from the job

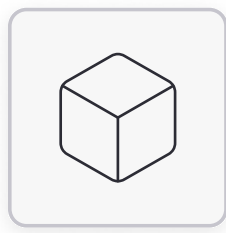
Completing training doesn't always mean employees are prepared to apply it. Training is more useful when employees understand what it means for the situations they encounter at work.

Build or review your retail compliance program

Whether you're launching a new compliance program or improving an existing one, start with a simple question:

Can employees consistently find, understand, and apply the training they need to do their jobs safely and confidently?

If the answer isn't always "yes," this checklist can help identify opportunities for improvement.



Coverage

- ☐ We know which training is required by role.
- ☐ We account for differences across states, jurisdictions, and locations.
- ☐ We have identified our highest-risk compliance and safety areas.
- ☐ Seasonal and temporary employees receive appropriate training.
- ☐ Role-specific safety risks are reflected in training.



Delivery and accessibility

- ☐ Employees can access training regardless of location or shift.
- ☐ Training works on the devices employees actually use.
- ☐ Language and accessibility needs are being addressed.
- ☐ Employees can find critical information again when they need it.



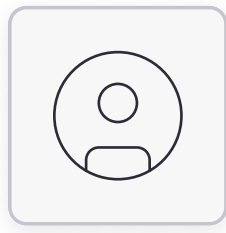
Reporting

- ☐ We can easily track required training completion.
- ☐ We can quickly document completion when asked.
- ☐ Managers can see who still needs training.
- ☐ Records aren't scattered across multiple disconnected systems.
- ☐ We know where responsibility sits for maintaining training records.



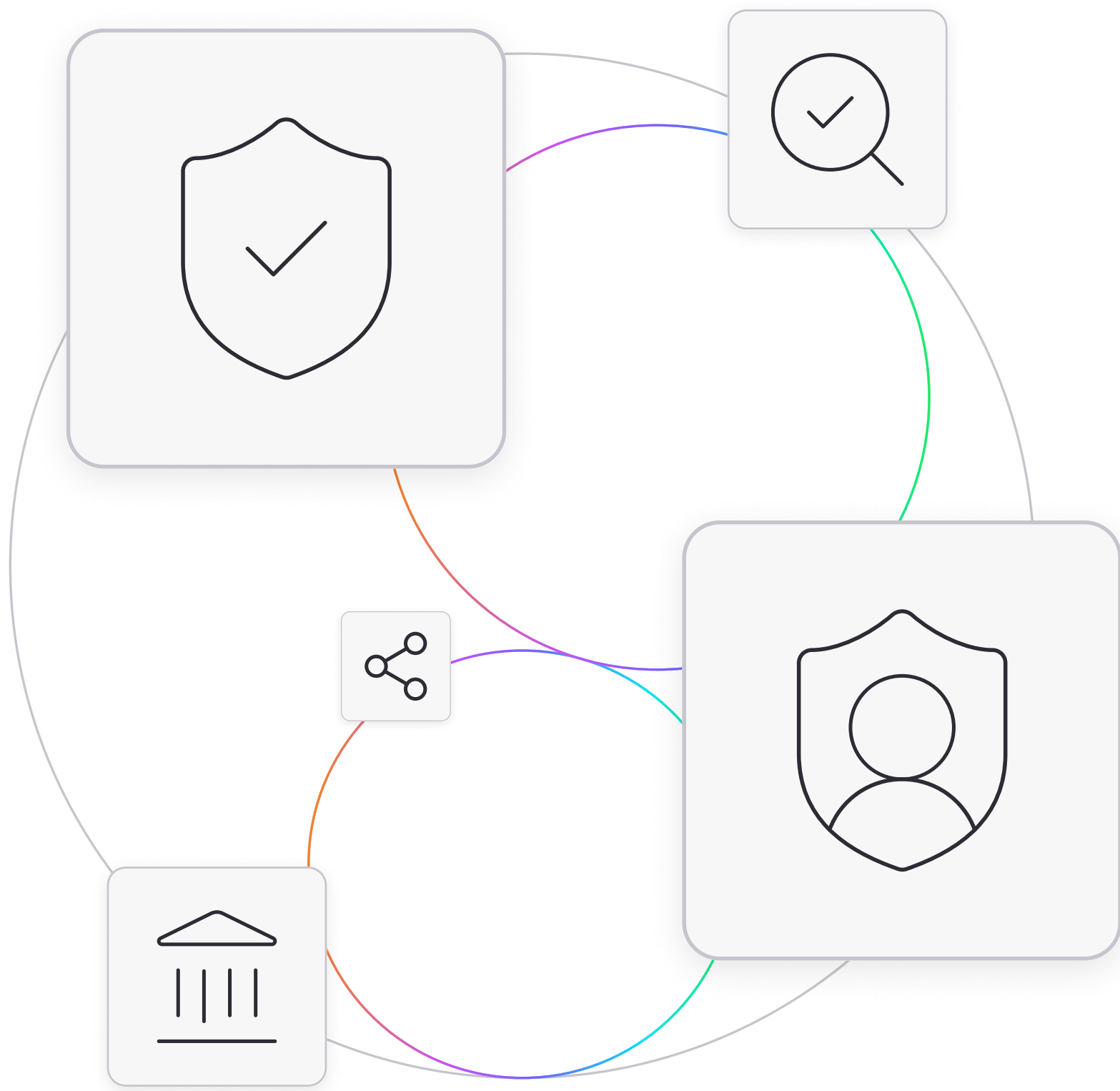
Content and trust

- ☐ Training is reviewed regularly.
- ☐ Policy changes are reflected quickly.
- ☐ Our training comes from sources we trust.
- ☐ Employees are notified when important updates occur.
- ☐ Training reflects situations employees may actually encounter.



Workforce readiness

- ☐ Learning supports more than compliance.
- ☐ Managers reinforce learning with their teams.
- ☐ Employees understand how training connects to their work.
- ☐ Learning supports customer experience as well as compliance.



Quick assessment



Mostly checked

Your program likely has a strong foundation.

The next question is whether your coverage stays current as requirements, roles, locations, and workforce needs change.



Mixed

You may have strong training in some areas but gaps in consistency, coverage, accessibility, or reporting.

Prioritize the unchecked items connected to your highest-risk areas.



Many unchecked

It may be time to step back and review how learning is being delivered, managed, and reinforced across your organization.

What good retail compliance looks like

Strong compliance programs aren't defined by more training. They're defined by whether people and the business are prepared.



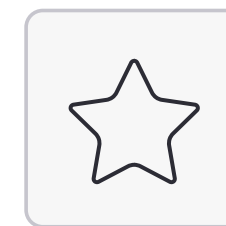
Complete

You understand the training needed across roles, locations, jurisdictions, and risk areas.



Trusted

Critical content is accurate, regularly reviewed, and built by credible experts.



Relevant

Employees can see how the training applies to the situations they actually encounter.



Accessible

Training reaches employees across shifts, locations, languages, abilities, and devices



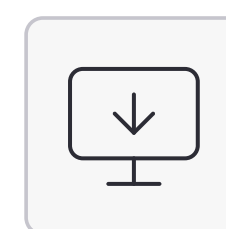
Consistent

Employees receive the same core expectations without individual locations reinventing the program.



Documented

Completion records are easy to track and retrieve when they're needed.



Current

Training changes when regulations, policies, technology, or risks change.



We have been able to reduce the number of compliance courses while maintaining standards... This saves a lot of time, around 35% compared to previous content used.

Darren Cooper, L&D Manager, Atlas Hotels

The strongest compliance programs don't just reduce risk. They prepare employees for the moments that matter most.

Building a retail workforce that's ready for what's next

Compliance and safety are the training retail organizations can't afford to get wrong. But employees also need the skills to perform, lead, and adapt as retail changes.

That means retail learning programs increasingly have two jobs:

Get critical requirements right

Keep people safe and the business protected with training in safety, compliance, cybersecurity, harassment prevention, certifications, and other required areas.

Build the skills people need to perform and adapt

Support onboarding, customer service, communication, leadership, technical and digital skills, AI skills, and professional development.



You shouldn't have to choose between keeping up with today's requirements and preparing people for tomorrow.



We've reduced our employee turnover from 30% to 22% by offering a personalized leadership development program to new store managers.

Marc Strickland, Director of People Development, [National Vision](#)

Why retail organizations choose OpenSesame

Retail organizations need to get critical training right without juggling multiple vendors for everything their workforce needs.

OpenSesame brings compliance, safety, essential skills, and workforce development together with trusted content, flexible delivery, and expert support.

Know you're covered

Access deep training coverage across the areas businesses can't afford to get wrong.

5,000+
compliance courses

7,000+
safety courses

Coverage spans workplace safety, harassment prevention, workplace violence, food safety, cybersecurity, data privacy, and other critical training needs.

Trust the training you're delivering

Critical training requires more than a large catalog.

OpenSesame publishers and content go through a 42-point quality review, with recognizable and specialized publishers held to rigorous standards.

Our retail catalog includes content from publishers such as Axonify, EasyLlama, Madecraft, and HSI-ej4, alongside specialized providers covering workplace safety, harassment prevention, food safety, security, and other retail training needs.

Compliance content is regularly reviewed and updated, so your team can spend less time second-guessing its training.

Reach your workforce wherever they work

OpenSesame offers training across devices and more than 70 languages, helping you deliver consistent learning across stores, roles, shifts, and teams.

And with integrations across 200+ LMSs, training fits into the systems you already use.

Cover more needs with one partner

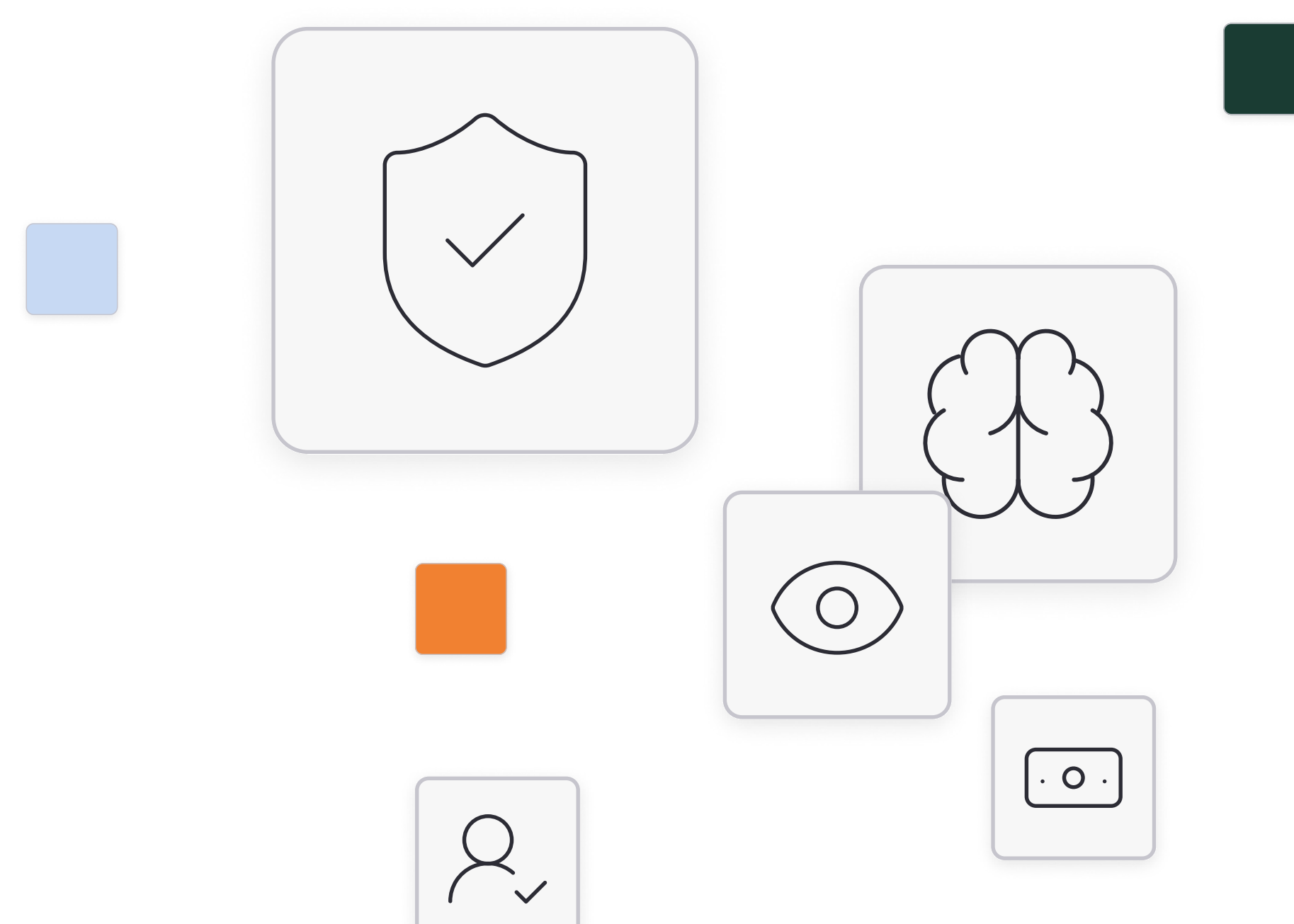
Go beyond required training with 60,000+ curated courses covering onboarding, customer service, leadership, communication, digital and AI skills, and professional development.

Instead of piecing together multiple providers, you can keep your business covered while building the skills your workforce needs for what's next.

Get expertise when you need it

OpenSesame isn't a set-it-and-forget-it content library.

Expert curators and dedicated customer success teams help you select the right training, build programs, and respond as requirements and business needs change.



How confident are you that every store is covered?

As your organization grows, more locations, roles, employees, and requirements create more opportunities for critical training to fall through the cracks.

OpenSesame helps you bring compliance, safety, and workforce development together with trusted content and expert support.



See how OpenSesame can help you get critical retail training right

Book a demo

Explore retail training

Public resources

For additional information about applicable requirements, consult appropriate legal and compliance professionals and official sources including:

- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)
- [National Retail Federation \(NRF\)](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#)
- [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#)
- [PCI Security Standards Council](#)