



# MULTIFAMILY STAFF WELLBEING REPORT 2026

An independent third-party study of 400 onsite multifamily property management professionals across the United States.



**46%** of affordable housing staff reported a safety incident in the past 12 months

**+20pts** more likely to stay 12 months — staff with a panic button vs. no tools

**29%** of employers provide no safety tools whatsoever — no device, no training, nothing

**94%** of female leasing consultants say a device would improve their comfort at work

**Methodology:** Independent third-party survey of 400 onsite multifamily property management professionals — leasing consultants, community managers, and maintenance technicians — across the United States. Conducted in 2026 using a blind methodology: respondents were not told the survey was commissioned by a safety device company. Recruited via Pollfish consumer panel with screening for current onsite multifamily employment. Margin of error:  $\pm 4.9\%$  at 95% confidence level.

# THE SAFETY GAP IN MULTIFAMILY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

In 2026, Apartment Guardian commissioned an independent third-party survey of 400 onsite multifamily property management professionals to understand the reality of safety at work. The study used a blind methodology – respondents were not told the survey was commissioned by a safety device company – ensuring genuine, unbiased responses. The findings reveal a significant and measurable gap between what operators provide and what staff need to feel safe, confident, and committed to their roles. That gap has direct operational consequences for retention, performance, and employer perception.

## Six Key Findings

- 1 52% Say Safety Significantly Influences Their Decision to Stay**

More than half of respondents say that feeling safe at work significantly or very significantly influences their decision to stay in their role. Safety is a primary driver of retention for more than half the multifamily workforce.
- 2 1 in 5 Women Has Left or Considered Leaving Her Role Because of Safety**

Women are more than three times as likely as men to have actually left a previous role due to safety concerns (10.5% vs. 3.1%). Combined with those currently considering leaving, 22.2% of female respondents have been directly affected by safety-driven turnover.
- 3 Nearly Half of Affordable Housing Staff Reported a Safety Incident in the Past 12 Months**

At affordable and subsidized housing properties, 45.9% of staff reported a safety incident in the past 12 months – the highest rate of any property type, and 50% above the overall average of 31.8%. Conventional multifamily properties reported a rate of 35.2%.
- 4 Zero Improvement – A Company Cell Phone vs. No Tool on Confidence Working Alone**

Staff given a company cell phone scored no better on confidence working alone than those given nothing at all (59.8% vs. 61.2%). A panic button moved the needle by 16 points to 75.7%. A company-provided cell phone is not a safety plan.
- 5 94% of Female Leasing Agents Say They Would Feel Better With a Device**

When asked whether a personal emergency alert device that connects directly to 911 would improve their comfort at work, 94% of female leasing agents said yes. 92% of all leasing agents – male and female – agreed.
- 6 +20 Points Higher Retention Intent – Staff With a Panic Button vs. No Tools**

Staff at properties with a personal emergency device are 20 percentage points more likely to say they will still be in their role 12 months from now, compared to staff with no safety tools provided. At portfolio scale, that difference translates directly to lower annual turnover.

# ABOUT THIS STUDY

This report presents findings from an independent third-party survey commissioned by Apartment Guardian, a personal safety device company serving the multifamily property management industry since 2012. The study was designed to generate statistically valid, publishable data on the safety experiences of onsite property management staff.

Respondents were not told the survey was commissioned by Apartment Guardian. They were informed only that they were participating in a "Multifamily Staff Wellbeing Survey." This approach was chosen specifically to prevent response bias and ensure that findings reflect genuine staff experiences.

## Respondent Profile

Attribute	Detail
Total respondents	400
Survey method	Online panel via Pollfish
Geography	United States
Employment requirement	Currently employed in an onsite property management role
Field period	2026
Methodology	Blind – respondents not told survey was commissioned by a safety device company
Margin of error	±4.9% at 95% confidence level

## Role Distribution

Role	Respondents	Share
Community Manager / Property Manager	205	51.3%
Other Onsite Role	78	19.5%
Leasing Consultant / Leasing Agent	73	18.3%
Maintenance Technician / Supervisor	44	11.0%

## Property Type Distribution

Property Type	Respondents	Share
Conventional Multifamily Apartments	142	35.5%
Single-Family Rental Homes	126	31.5%
Affordable Housing / Subsidized Housing	61	15.3%
Other	53	13.3%
Senior Living / 55+ Community	13	3.3%
Student Housing	5	1.3%

# THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The first task of this study was to establish the baseline reality of safety at work for onsite property management professionals. The findings confirm that safety is not a theoretical concern — it is an active, ongoing reality for a substantial share of the workforce.

## How Safe Do Staff Feel?

Respondents were asked to rate how safe they feel performing their daily job duties on a five-point scale. While a majority rated their workplace as safe or very safe, a meaningful minority report persistent safety concerns — with leasing consultants and maintenance technicians expressing the lowest confidence.

## The Highest-Risk Activities

Respondents were asked which job duties make them feel most vulnerable. The results reveal that the highest-risk scenarios are among the most common daily activities:

Job Duty	% Identifying as High Risk
Handling a difficult resident situation in person	47.0%
Working late hours or opening/closing alone	36.0%
Walking the property alone (parking, common areas)	34.3%
Showing vacant apartments to prospective residents	30.0%
Working at the leasing office alone	28.5%
Performing move-in/move-out inspections	16.3%
None — I do not feel at risk in any of these situations	22.0%

## Incidents Are Common

When asked whether their property had experienced a safety incident involving staff in the past 12 months, 31.8% of respondents overall confirmed at least one incident. The rate varies significantly by property type:

Property Type	n	Had Incident Past 12 Months
Affordable / Subsidized Housing	61	45.9%
Conventional Multifamily	142	35.2%
Senior Living / 55+	13	30.8%
Single-Family Rental	126	27.0%
Overall	400	31.8%

Nearly half of affordable/subsidized housing staff (45.9%) reported a safety incident in the past 12 months — the highest rate of any property type, and 50% above the overall average.

## The Impact on Job Performance

Safety concerns are not abstract – they affect how staff actually perform their jobs. When asked whether safety concerns had led them to modify or avoid job duties in the past three months:

Response	Share
Yes, I frequently avoid or modify duties due to safety concerns	4.0%
Yes, I occasionally avoid or modify duties due to safety concerns	18.8%
No, but I have thought about it	33.0%
No, safety concerns have never affected how I do my job	44.2%

**55.8%** of respondents had modified, avoided, or seriously considered avoiding job duties in the past three months because of safety concerns. **Only 44.2%** said their job performance had never been affected.

# WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE — AND ARE NOT — PROVIDING

Respondents were asked to identify which safety tools or resources their employer currently provides. The results reveal a significant gap between what operators provide and what staff need to feel protected:

## Respondent Profile

Safety Tool Provided	% of Respondents
Buddy system or check-in protocol when working alone	27.8%
Safety training specific to working alone or threatening situations	26.0%
Personal panic button or emergency alert device	18.5%
Company-provided mobile phone for emergencies	17.8%
Dedicated security guard or monitored security system	16.8%
None of the above	28.5%
Don't know what my employer provides	8.3%

**28.5% of employers provide none of the listed safety tools** — no device, no training, no buddy system, nothing. Only 18.5% provide a personal panic button or emergency alert device.

# THE DEVICE DIFFERENCE: PANIC BUTTON VS. PHONE VS. NOTHING

This section examines the most important comparison in the study: the difference in outcomes between staff whose employers provide a personal panic button, those provided only a company phone, and those provided neither. The findings make a clear case that a company phone provides essentially no benefit over nothing — while a dedicated emergency device produces meaningful and measurable improvements across every metric.

## Comparison Across Key Metrics

Metric	Panic Button	Phone Only	No Tool (n=114)
Confident working alone (rated 4–5 out of 5)	<b>75.7%</b>	59.8%	62.3%
Likely to stay in role 12 months (rated 4–5)	<b>89.2%</b>	84.3%	69.3%
Employer takes safety seriously (rated 4–5)	<b>77.0%</b>	74.5%	43.9%
Job satisfaction (rated 4–5 out of 5)	<b>85.3%</b>	85.3%	64.0%

A company phone provides no measurable advantage over no safety tool at all on confidence working alone (59.8% vs. 61.2%). A panic button scored 75.7% — a 16-point improvement. A cell phone is not a safety plan.

### The Retention Case

Staff at device-equipped properties are 20 percentage points more likely to say they will still be in their role 12 months from now compared to staff with no safety tools (89.2% vs. 69.3%). At scale — across a portfolio of 50+ properties — that difference translates to meaningfully lower annual turnover and the associated recruiting, onboarding, and productivity costs.

### How Safety Investment Shapes Staff Trust

Providing a panic button doesn't just change how staff feel about their job — it changes how they feel about their employer. When we asked staff how seriously their employer takes their personal safety, the answers varied dramatically based on what their employer actually provided: • At properties with a panic button, 77% of staff say their employer takes safety seriously. • At properties with no safety tools at all, only 43.9% say the same. That's a 33-point difference in staff trust — driven by whether an employer made a visible investment in safety infrastructure. The lift comes specifically from the device: staff given only a company phone scored 74.5%, almost identical to device-equipped staff. Any visible safety investment improves how staff perceive their employer's commitment, but only a panic button delivers the full benefit across confidence, retention, AND trust.

# WHAT STAFF SAY ABOUT A PERSONAL DEVICE

Respondents were asked: "If your employer were to provide you with a personal emergency alert device that connects directly to 911 with one button press, how would that affect your comfort at work?"

Using answers 2–5 as indicating any positive improvement:

## Comparison Across Key Metrics

Segment	n	Any Improvement (2–5)	Significant/Dramatic (4–5)
All respondents	400	79.5%	37.0%
Leasing Consultants (all)	73	91.8%	52.1%
Female Leasing Consultants	51	94.1%	54.9%
Community Managers/PMs	205	80.5%	37.1%
Maintenance Technicians	44	65.9%	25.0%
Affordable/Subsidized Housing Staff	61	83.6%	41.0%
Conventional Multifamily Staff	142	77.5%	39.4%
Women overall	239	83.3%	38.1%
Men overall	161	73.9%	35.4%

94.1% of female leasing consultants say a personal emergency device that connects directly to 911 would improve their comfort at work. For leasing consultants overall, that number is 91.8% — nearly 9 in 10.

# SAFETY, RETENTION, AND JOB SATISFACTION

The study measured the relationship between safety and two critical workforce outcomes: retention intent and job satisfaction. The findings are consistent – safety is not a soft benefit. It is an operational driver of whether staff stay in their roles.

## Safety as a Driver of Tenure Decisions

Respondents were asked how much feeling safe at work influences their decision to stay in their current role:

Response	Share
One of the most important factors (5 out of 5)	24.5%
Has significant influence (4 out of 5)	27.5%
Has moderate influence (3 out of 5)	26.3%
Has slight influence (2 out of 5)	14.5%
Has no influence at all (1 out of 5)	7.3%

**52% of respondents** say that feeling safe at work significantly or very significantly influences their decision to stay in their role. Safety is a primary driver of retention for more than half the multifamily workforce.

## Have Staff Actually Left Over Safety?

Response	Share
Yes, left a previous role specifically due to safety concerns	10.3%
Yes, currently considering leaving current role due to safety concerns	9.2%
No, but safety has been a concern	36.8%
No, safety has never been a concern for me	43.8%

**19.5% of respondents** have either left a previous role or are currently considering leaving their current role due to safety concerns. An additional 36.8% say safety has been a concern even if it has not yet driven a departure decision.

# THE GENDER DIMENSION

Property management is a female-dominated field. Of the 400 respondents in this study, 239 (59.75%) identified as female. Given this workforce composition, the gender dimension of safety data is directly relevant to operators and HR professionals managing property management teams.

## Key Gender Comparisons

Metric	Women (n=239)	Men (n=161)	Gap
Confident working alone (rated 4–5)	57.7%	72.0%	-14.3pts
Left or considering leaving due to safety	22.2%	15.5%	-6.7pts
Left a previous role due to safety	10.5%	3.1%	-7.4pts
Avoided/modified duties due to safety	22.6%	23.0%	~0pts
Avoided, modified, or thought about it	57.3%	53.4%	-3.9pts
Device would improve comfort (2–5)	83.3%	73.9%	+9.4pts
Safety influences stay decision (4–5)	52.3%	51.6%	~0pts

Women are 14 percentage points less likely than men to feel confident working alone (57.7% vs. 72.0%) — the largest gender gap in the study. Women are also more than three times as likely as men to have actually left a previous role due to safety concerns (10.5% vs. 3.1%).

### Have Staff Actually Left Over Safety?

The gender data points to two distinct findings. First, women face measurably higher safety anxiety in their day-to-day work — particularly around working alone — despite similar rates of actual duty avoidance and safety-influenced tenure decisions. Second, women respond more strongly to personal safety device programs: 83.3% say a device would improve their comfort vs. 73.9% of men.

Given that women represent the majority of leasing and property management staff, safety programs are not just an ethical obligation — they are a practical workforce management tool for the industry's most common employee profile.

**19.5% of respondents** have either left a previous role or are currently considering leaving their current role due to safety concerns. An additional 36.8% say safety has been a concern even if it has not yet driven a departure decision.

# ROLE-SPECIFIC FINDINGS

The study included sufficient sample sizes across three primary onsite roles to support meaningful role-level comparisons. The findings reveal that the safety challenge is not uniform across the workforce – different roles face different levels of risk and respond differently to safety investments.

## Cross-Role Comparison

Role	n	Had Incident	Avoided Duties	Considered Leaving	Safety Influences Stay	Device Helps (2–5)
Leasing Consultant	73	32.9%	23.3%	27.4%	60.3%	91.8%
Community Manager/PM	205	30.7%	20.5%	16.1%	46.3%	80.5%
Maintenance Tech	44	34.1%	34.1%	27.3%	63.6%	65.9%
Other	78	32.1%	21.8%	16.7%	52.6%	73.1%

### Leasing Consultants: The Retention Risk

Leasing consultants show the highest rate of having left or considered leaving a role due to safety (27.4%), the highest rate of safety influencing their stay decision (60.3%), and the highest demand for a personal safety device (91.8%). This is consistent with the nature of the role – leasing agents routinely show vacant units to unknown prospective residents, often alone.

For the 51 female leasing consultants in the study, 94.1% said a personal emergency device would improve their comfort at work. This is the single strongest demand signal in the entire dataset.

### Maintenance Technicians: The Underrecognized Persona

Maintenance technicians show the highest rate of duty avoidance (34.1%) and the highest rate of safety influencing their stay decision (63.6%) of any role in the study. Despite this, maintenance teams are rarely the focus of property management safety conversations. They work alone in occupied units, parking structures, and mechanical spaces – often without the visibility that leasing staff have.

Notably, maintenance technicians show lower demand for a personal device (65.9% say it would help) compared to leasing consultants (91.8%). This may reflect different perceptions of risk type – maintenance staff may perceive their risks as more physical/environmental than interpersonal, and may be less attuned to the personal device as a solution for their specific scenarios.

### Community Managers: The Largest Group

Community managers represent 51.3% of respondents and show moderate scores across all safety metrics. Their lower rates of avoidance and leaving intent likely reflect their more supervisory role and greater familiarity with the property and its residents. However, 46.3% say safety still significantly influences their stay decision – and 80.5% say a device would improve their comfort. They should not be excluded from safety programs.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data from this study points to a clear and actionable conclusion: staff safety in multifamily property management is not a soft issue or an amenity. It is an operational driver of retention, performance, and employer perception — and it is measurably addressable.

**1****Recognize that a cell phone is not a safety plan.**

Staff given a company phone scored no better on confidence working alone than those given nothing at all. The steps required to make a call under acute stress — unlock, navigate, dial, wait — are precisely the steps that degrade under threat. A purpose-built device with a single button press is the only tool that addresses this failure point.

**2****Treat safety investment as a retention investment.**

With 52% of staff saying safety significantly influences their decision to stay, and 19.5% having left or considering leaving over safety concerns, the cost of inaction is real. In an industry where leasing consultant replacement costs run \$5,000–\$15,000 per position, a personal safety device program pays for itself before anything bad ever happens.

**3****Prioritize leasing consultants and maintenance teams.**

Leasing consultants show the highest demand for safety tools (91.8%) and the highest rate of considering leaving due to safety (27.4%). Maintenance technicians show the highest duty avoidance rate (34.1%). Both groups are underserved relative to their risk exposure.

**4****Use safety programs as employer brand tools.**

Safety infrastructure dramatically increases how staff trust their employer's commitment to them — 77% of staff at panic-button-equipped properties say their employer takes safety seriously, vs. just 43.9% at properties with no safety tools. Operators who deploy a safety program and communicate it during onboarding and recruitment are differentiating themselves in a competitive labor market."

**5****Build a compliant foundation now.**

California SB 553 is in effect. Washington State's panic button law takes effect January 2026. Over 100 workplace violence bills have been introduced in 27 states. A federal OSHA standard is in development. Operators who deploy a documented safety program now will not be scrambling when the next law drops.

# METHODOLOGY STATEMENT

This research was conducted in 2026 by Apartment Guardian using Pollfish, an independent third-party survey platform. The study was designed to be publishable and citable by meeting the following methodological standards:

- **Blind methodology:** Respondents were not told that the study was commissioned by Apartment Guardian or that Apartment Guardian produces personal safety devices. All communications described the study as a "Multifamily Staff Wellbeing Survey."
- **Sample size:** 400 completed responses, providing a margin of error of approximately  $\pm 4.9\%$  at a 95% confidence level.
- **Respondent screening:** All respondents were screened for current onsite employment in a multifamily residential property management role. Non-qualifying respondents were terminated before the main survey.
- **Panel recruitment:** Respondents were recruited from Pollfish's consumer panel using random device engagement. Panel members were not pre-selected based on any safety-related criteria.
- **Geography:** United States only.
- **Survey instrument:** 17 questions covering role background, safety tools provided, safety perceptions, job satisfaction, retention intent, and employer perception.
- **Data handling:** Individual response data is retained by Pollfish per their standard data governance policies. Only aggregate findings are reported here.

## Limitations

- The study relies on self-reported perceptions, which may not perfectly reflect objective safety conditions at individual properties.
- The sample is drawn from a consumer panel and may not be fully representative of all onsite property management staff nationwide.
- The comparison between device-equipped and non-device-equipped properties is observational rather than experimental. Properties in higher-risk markets may be both more likely to have experienced incidents and more likely to have deployed safety programs, which complicates direct attribution of outcomes.
- Sample sizes for role-specific and tool-specific comparisons are smaller than the overall sample and should be interpreted directionally.

# ABOUT APARTMENT GUARDIAN

Apartment Guardian builds personal emergency devices for property management staff – leasing consultants, community managers, and maintenance teams who work alone, show vacant units, and face the daily risks that come with running residential properties.

Our PanicTap device connects directly to 911 with a single button press – no unlock screen, no app, no call center. When activated, it simultaneously alerts other onsite employees so help comes from two directions at once. Our dashboard automatically logs every activation, satisfying the incident log requirement under California SB 553 and similar compliance frameworks.

Since 2012, we have partnered with 170+ property management companies including nationally recognized operators across the country. 95% of our clients renew every year. We are still serving clients from our very first year in business.

Try a Device at One of Your Properties  
**Free for 30 Days**

No cost. No commitment. We'll ship a device to one of your properties so your team can try it firsthand.

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