

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Sep 8: Canada matched the new Trump tariffs with counter-tariffs of 15%, 25%, and 50% \$27.6 billion in U.S. imports focusing on steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp and paper, electronics, and other impacted sectors.

Action Point: Find out about the [8 ways the U.S. tariffs affect](#) Canadian workplaces and HR activities.

New Laws

Aug 28: Canada announced a new \$7.5 billion package to support businesses and workers impacted by the latest round of U.S. tariffs, including: i. an additional \$1.5 billion in Regional Tariff Response Initiative funding for small and medium-sized enterprises; ii. a new \$500 million liquidity stream under the Business Development Bank of Canada's Pivot to Grow program to help businesses manage immediate cash-flow pressures; iii. lowering the minimum revenue requirement for Business Development Bank of Canada tariff programs to \$1 million; iv. an added \$2 billion Canada Strong Diversification Fund support for businesses with shovel-ready capital maintenance projects; and v. a new suite of \$3.5 billion Rapid Response Supports for Workers and Employers affected by tariffs.

Payroll

Aug 7: Newly revised [regulations](#) require attestation rather than a signature to register for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). Applicants may no longer mark their applications if they're unable to sign. Registration is also now mandatory and the Commission is required to assign a SIN to persons who are legally required to have one and don't apply.

Action Point: [Collecting SINs from new employees](#) can be a tricky process fraught with hidden legal risks. Find out how to do it effectively.

Payroll

Sep 14: The Canada Employment Insurance Commission announced that the 2027 EI premium rate will be \$1.64 per \$100 of insurable earnings for employees and \$2.30 for employers. The rate for Québec residents covered under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) will be \$1.29 per \$100 and \$1.81 for employers. Maximum insurable earnings in 2027 will increase from \$68,900 to \$70,800. The maximum annual EI contribution for workers will increase by \$38.05 to \$1,161.12 (up \$53.27 for employers to \$1,625.57 per employee).

Action Point: Find out about the [8 important new payroll changes](#) that will affect 2026 source deductions.

Training

Aug 28: The federal government launched a new Sectoral Workforce Innovation Fund (SWIF) to support projects addressing skilled labour shortages across priority

sectors. Projects eligible for SWIF funding could include faster training approaches, micro-credentials, skills assessments, targeted certification, and other programs to enabling Canadian workers to prepare for in-demand occupations and employers to manage skilled labour shortages.

Action Point: Find out about the [rules governing whether employees are entitled to be paid for training time](#).

New Laws

Sep 15: The Canadian Government extended suspension of the federal fuel excise tax until January 31, 2027, and application of 50% of the regular excise tax rate from February 1 through March 31, 2027. Ottawa temporarily suspended the federal fuel excise tax on April 20, 2026, saving Canadians 10 cents per litre on gasoline and unleaded aviation gasoline, 11 cents per litre on leaded aviation gasoline, and 4 cents per litre on diesel and aviation fuel.

Immigration

Aug 28: From now through September 29, Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and foreign travelers seeking to enter Canada who've been in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, or South Sudan within the previous 21 days must undergo assessment for Ebola upon arrival. Foreign nationals who were in the DRC within the past 21 days may not enter the country due to the Ebola threat.

Action Point: Find out how to create a [policy for business travel to dangerous locations](#).

Privacy

Sep 10: The Privacy Commissioner of Canada issued new [guidance](#) to help businesses subject to the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) vet potential third-party service providers. PIPEDA requires organizations to safeguard the privacy of personal information that they transfer to outside providers for processing. The guidance outlines best practices for identifying privacy compliance risks, deciding whether to work with a particular provider, drafting contractual protections, and documenting compliance. Deadline to comment: December 4.

Action Point: Find out how to [avoid privacy violations](#) when using digital technology to monitor employees.

Health & Safety

Aug 13: Employment Social Development Canada (ESDC) issued new Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) [guidance](#) to help employers and workers minimize health hazards in "hot environments," including heat stress, hand grip impediments, and eye strain.

Health & Safety

Aug 12: Environment and Climate Change Canada revised its methods of issuing severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings. Improvements include speedier and more targeted warnings sent directly in English and French to people in affected polygon-configured areas along with more detailed tracking of individual storms.

CASES

Discrimination: \$20,000 Cap on Discrimination Damages Is Constitutional

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* allows individuals who suffer discrimination to sue for pain/suffering and willful/reckless special damages of up to \$20,000. A union representing 170,000 federal employees and legal clinic representing impoverished workers teamed up to file a lawsuit claiming that the damages cap violated Section 15(1) of the Charter guaranteeing the right of all individuals to “equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination.” The federal court disagreed and dismissed the case. But it also noted that while constitutional, the \$20,000 cap was established in 1998 and way out of whack with inflation. Unfortunately, adjusting the cap was the responsibility of Parliament, not the courts, it concluded [[Canada \(Public Service Alliance\) v. Canada](#), 2026 FCA 143 (CanLII), August 27, 2026].

Action Point: Although upholding the current cap on special damages is good news for employers, the best liability management strategy is to avoid discrimination in the first place by implementing a legally sound [Non-Discrimination Policy](#) at your workplace.

Drugs & Alcohol: Safety-Sensitive Railway Worker Who Tests Positive Gets Reinstated

A railway worker with a history of safety violations had to undergo post-incident drug testing after an apprentice he was working got hit by a locomotive and broke his ankle. The test came back positive for marijuana and the worker got fired based on his total demerit points. The federal arbitrator upheld the union’s grievance. While discipline was clearly in order, 60 demerit points for the incident was too much. So, the arbitrator reduced the penalty to 35 demerit points, putting the worker under the threshold for termination. Nor was the positive test just cause to terminate because the evidence showed that the worker had a drug-related disability that the railway had to reasonably accommodate. **Result:** The worker was reinstated for a two-year period under which he’d be subject to random testing and subject to termination if he failed [[IBEW, System Council No. 11 v Canadian National Railway Company](#), 2026 CanLII 73002 (CA LA), July 21, 2026].

Action Point: The moral of this case is that alcohol and drug addictions are disabilities for which employers must make “reasonable accommodations” under anti-discrimination laws. Find out how to implement an effective [fitness for duty policy to control substance abuse](#) at your workplace without violating employees’ rights to reasonable accommodations.