

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pay Equity

Jun 17: The wage gap between men and women is slowly shrinking but pay equity is still miles away, concludes a new Statistics Canada report. Women's average hourly wages grew faster (+21.3%) than men's (+15.9%) between 2006 and 2024, with wage gaps varying significantly by age. The biggest disparity, 12.2%, was between women and men of age 55+.

Action Point: Find out about [pay equity laws](#) and their practical impact on HR operations.

Immigration

Jul 9: Of the 1,488 Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program inspections carried out by the federal government from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, 12% found employers to be non-compliant, resulting in over \$10.2 million in monetary penalties issued. That's more than double last year's total of \$4.5 million. Thirty employers were also banned from the Program.

Action Point: Find out what companies and their HR directors need to know to [navigate the immigration law maze](#).

Immigration

Jul 15: [New federal regulations](#) took effect allowing the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants to impose tighter controls on immigration consultants and impose stricter penalties on consultants who break the rules.

Employment Benefits

Jul 3: The Office of the Chief Actuary (OCA) released the findings of an independent panel's review of the 32nd Actuarial Report on the Canada Pension Plan (CPP).
Punchline: The Report's methods and assumptions were reasonable and in compliance with statutory requirements and professional standards of practice. The OCA also issued recommendations to strengthen CPP reporting going forward.

New Laws

Jul 17: The federal government announced that it's expanding the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Starting this month, the CCB will provide families with up to \$8,157 per child under the age of 6 and up to \$6,883 per child aged 6 to 17. That's a year-to-year increase of up to \$160 per child under age 6 and up to \$135 per child age 6 to 17.

New Laws

Jul 7: Ottawa launched its new Small Business Procurement Program (SBPP) designed to make it easier for small businesses to compete for and procure contracts from the federal government. The federal government purchases more than \$37 billion in goods, services, and construction each year. Small and medium-

sized enterprises (SMEs) represent about 47.2% of private-sector gross domestic product (GDP) and employ 63.6% of the private-sector workforce.

New Laws

Jun 17: First Reading for [Private Member Bill C-291](#), proposing to amend the *Department of Industry Act* to require the government to engage in a small business impact assessment for every legislative initiative that could have a potentially significant impact on Canadian small businesses. The Bill is unlikely to pass.

Labour Relations

July 3: The federal government launched a second round of public consultations on [proposed changes](#) to the *Canada Labour Code*. Labour relations issues on the table include expanded government powers to keep labour peace, expedited grievance arbitration, bad faith bargaining, duration of strikes and lockouts, and first collective agreements. Deadline to comment: August 2.

Leaves of Absence

Jul 3: From now through August 2, the federal government is holding public consultations on *Canada Labour Code* reforms. While most of the [proposed changes](#) affect collective bargaining and labour relations, the government is also seeking feedback on employment standards issues, including paid medical leave and new rules governing employers' rights to discipline employees for wage theft.

Action Point: Find out about the [6 steps](#) you can take to prevent your employees from committing time theft.

New Laws

Jun 22: The Government of Canada launched a new Nuclear Energy Strategy to strengthen energy affordability, security, and sustainability by building new reactors, promoting uranium development, and developing a national nuclear workforce. Nuclear power currently generates approximately 13% of Canada's electricity from 17 CANDU reactors in Ontario and New Brunswick.

New Laws

Jun 19: Canada imposed a new 10% surtax on global imports of canned vegetables for up to 200 days. In accordance with Canada's international trade obligations, the new tariff doesn't apply to canned vegetables from the U.S., Mexico, Israel, Chile, and developing countries. Meanwhile, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal is continuing its inquiry into whether increased imports of these products is causing serious injury to Canadian vegetable processors.

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

New Laws

Jul 15: The federal Competition Bureau is seeking public feedback on its proposed [Cartel Enforcement Guidelines](#) for cracking down on bid-rigging, price-fixing, market allocation, supply restriction, wage-fixing, no-poaching, and other illegal business agreements. The Guidelines are particularly important for businesses

that engage in mergers and acquisitions and/or interact with competitors and other businesses via collaborations or joint ventures. Deadline [to comment](#): September 13.

Training

Jun 22: The federal government published revised safety training regulations for railway workers that will take effect in 2028. Highlights of the new [Railway Personnel Training and Qualifications Regulations](#) include: i. Addition of remote control locomotive operators and rail traffic controllers to the list of positions designated as critical for safe railway operations; ii. Expanded training requirements for certification to work in a safety critical position; iii. Addition of Crew Resource Management to required safety training for railway workers; iv. New requirement that workers with less than two years of experience in a safety critical position have access to somebody with more experience at all times; and v. New recordkeeping requirements for training, examinations, and evaluations.

Discrimination

Jun 18: Royal Assent for [Bill C-9](#) making it a crime to wilfully promote hatred against any identifiable group by displaying certain symbols in a public place or intentionally obstruct or intimidate a person from attending a mosque or other public place of religious worship and repealing the requirement that the Attorney General consent to the prosecution of hate propaganda offences.

Workplace Violence

Jul 16: The federal government announced that it will invest \$607.4 million over four years, beginning in 2027-28, to continue the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence. Launched in 2022, the initiative is a 10-year plan, launched in 2022, that brings together federal, provincial, and territorial governments working towards ridding Canada of gender-based violence.

Action Point: Domestic and gender-based violence becomes an OHS issue and liability risk for employers when it happens at the victim's workplace. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

Workplace Violence

Jun 18: Royal Assent for [Bill C-16](#) adding new sexual violence protections to the *Criminal Code*, including a new offence for engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward an intimate partner and making it a first degree murder to commit what's called "femicide" (when the victim is female), defined as murder against an intimate partner as part of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, sexual violence, human trafficking or motivated by hate. The Bill also provides for tougher penalties for manslaughter committed in those circumstances while making it easier for victims to prove they were subject to criminal harassment.

Action Point: Are you doing enough to protect your employees against violence at work? Find out about the 10 things you must do to [prevent workplace violence](#).

Workplace Violence

Jun 17: [Bill C-225](#) amending the *Criminal Code* to create new offences for engaging in intimate partner violence and ban peace officers from releasing persons arrested for an intimate partner offence if they've committed such an offence in the last five

years or are at large on a release order for such an offence, received Royal Assent.

Health & Safety

Jul 13: Public consultations ended on [proposed changes](#) to harmonize the *Canadian Occupational Health and Safety (COHS) Regulations* personal protective equipment (PPE) standards with provincial and territorial requirements. The new federal rules also require employers to have a qualified person verify that mandatory PPE properly fits male and female workers.

Health & Safety

Jun 17: Major [revisions](#) to the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations* (TDGR) align Canadian rules with the United Nations Model Regulations and other international codes. Major changes include updated railway buffer car requirements, new Emergency Response Assistance Plan (ERAP) rules for anhydrous ammonia, and international air/marine framework updates. Deadline to comply: June 4, 2027.

CASES

Termination: Employee Who Quits Job to Go Back to School Full-Time Doesn't Get EI Benefits

A security guard applied for regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits after quitting his job to begin a full-time academic program in medical radiation technology. The Canada EI Commission denied the claim, finding that the guard voluntarily left his job without just cause. After losing in the Appeal Division, the guard took his case to federal court, but to no avail. The law is well settled that except programs authorized by the Commission, returning to school full-time doesn't constitute just cause for purposes of EI entitlement. "The primary purpose of EI benefits is to provide compensation for any insured who voluntarily finds themselves unemployed, it is not meant to assist those who make the personal choice to continue their training," the court explained. The guard was also unavailable for work while attending school full-time [[Dairo v. Canada \(Attorney General\)](#), 2026 FC 932 (CanLII), July 10, 2026].

Action Point: Use the HR Insider [Just Cause Questionnaire](#) to determine whether employees who leave your company are entitled to EI employment benefits.

Performance Review: Citing Lack of "Soft Skills" During Performance Review Is Not Bad Faith

After four straight years of "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations," a project manager at a digital media company received a rating of "meets some expectations" and needs to improve during his annual performance review based on his behaviour. The union insisted the rating was unfair to the extent it evaluated his "soft skills" and asked the federal arbitrator to change it to "meets expectations." The arbitrator refused citing its lack of jurisdiction to change a performance review that's carried out legitimately and in good faith. The company was well within its rights to point out weaknesses that the manager needed to improve and didn't engage arbitrary conduct or bad faith by assessing his soft skills during the performance review

process [[Canadian Broadcasting Corporation v Association of Professionals and Supervisors \(APS\)](#), 2026 CanLII 63468 (CA SA), June 26, 2026].

Action Point: Find out about the [9 most common performance review pitfalls and how to avoid them](#).

Discipline: Using Personal Cellphone on Job Is Just Cause to Fire Employee on Last Chance

Air Canada terminated a Cargo department employee for violating his Last Chance Agreement (LCA) by using a personal electronic device in a restricted area while operating potentially hazardous equipment. Even though it excluded a screenshot taken during a Microsoft Teams videoconference, the federal arbitrator found ample evidence that the employee was talking on his cell phone while in a tractor in an active work area. This was also a clear violation of the LCA for which Air Canada wasn't required to show any lenience [[Air Canada v Iam, District Lodge 140](#), 2026 CanLII 70770 (CA LA), June 26, 2026].

Action Point: One big reason Air Canada won this case is that it had clear written rules banning workers from using cellphones, headsets, and other personal devices that could interfere with communication or cause distractions that lead to accidents and injuries. Find out how to implement a legally sound and [effective Cellphone/Mobile Device Workplace Use Policy](#).

Drugs & Alcohol: Double Pre-Employment Drug Testing of New Trainees Is Unreasonable

After extensive hearings, a federal arbitrator ruled that three parts of a railway's drug and alcohol testing policy were unreasonable: i. Requiring newly hired trainees for safety sensitive positions to undergo both pre-employment drug testing and a later second drug test before completing their training; ii. A minimum 28-day cannabis ban; and iii. Reducing oral fluid drug testing thresholds from 10ng/ml to 4ng/ml and 2ng/ml. However, the arbitrator upheld other provisions challenged by the union as not unreasonable [[Teamsters Canada Rail Conference – Maintenance of Way Employees Division v Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway Company](#), 2026 CanLII 60171 (CA LA), June 19, 2026].

Action Point: Although this case turned on the reasonableness of the terms of the policy, workplace drug testing cases are often decided based not on what a testing policy says but how it's actually carried out. Find out [how to create a legally sound drug and alcohol testing policy](#) at your workplace.