



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Oct 1: Ontario raised its general minimum wage 35 cents to \$17.95 per hour. Separate minimum wages also increased by the same 2%: Students under 18: \$16.90; Homeworkers: \$19.70; Hunting & fishing guides: \$89.75 per day (< 5 consecutive hours in a day); and Hunting & fishing guides: \$179.50 per day (5 or more hours in a day).

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

Employment Standards

Sep 25: The Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) closed public consultations on [proposed regulations](#) that would ban talent agencies from charging entertainment workers more than the maximum commission amount authorized by or charge fees not authorized by regulation. Agencies would have to remit payments for entertainment workers within 10 business days, keep entertainment worker monies in a separate account that couldn't be commingled with agency funds, and provide entertainment workers owed commissions written statements containing prescribed information within a prescribed timeframe.

Action Point: Find out about the payroll rules governing [whether work performed by a talent agency worker is subject to EI and CPP deductions](#).

Employment Benefits

Aug 27: Global market volatility didn't prevent Ontario defined benefit (DB) pension plans from posting record funding levels in the second quarter of 2026. During the three-month period ending on June 30, 2026, the median solvency ratio increased 5% to an all-time high of 127%. DB pension plans achieved an average net return of 5.8% during the quarter and the percentage of plans projected to be fully funded on a solvency basis increased to 93%, compared to 90% at the end of the first quarter.

Employment Benefits

Aug 18: The Ontario Ministry of Finance wants to give employees greater access to the pension funds they transfer into locked-in accounts when they leave the plan. The [proposed](#) new regulations would allow for full unlocking of life income funds and locked-in retirement income funds, and full unlocking of locked-in retirement accounts if the balance is less than 40% of the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings (YMPE). Deadline to comment: October 2.

HR Policies

Aug 18: Last June, Ontario enacted a law called the *Municipal Accountability Act* empowering the government to adopt regulations holding municipal officials accountable for misconduct. Now the government has published [proposed](#) regulations to implement the legislation by, among other things, establishing a

single municipal code of conduct for all members of council and certain local boards, along with a standardized inquiry processes to be used by municipal integrity commissioners. Deadline to comment: October 2.

Action Point: Use the HR Insider [template](#) to create your own workplace harassment and violence policy and code of conduct.

New Laws

Sep 10: Ontario broadened eligibility for Protect Ontario Financing Program (POFP) loans to businesses facing tariff-related working capital challenges, including payroll, lease payments, and utility payments. The POFP is part of Ontario's broader \$30 billion tariff relief and support plan, which includes the \$150 million Ontario Together Trade Fund for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the \$40 million Trade-Impacted Communities Program to help communities and local businesses reduce reliance on U.S. markets, and the Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit.

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

New Laws

Aug 18: The federal government will deliver \$932 million to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the City of Toronto, and the Government of Ontario in fiscal year 2026-2027 to support infrastructure investment. AMO will receive \$746 million, Toronto will receive \$183 million, and Ontario's Ministry of Transportation will receive \$2.2 million.

New Laws

Aug 24: The federal government's Universal Broadband Fund announced that it will invest over \$8.3 million in two projects that will ensure access to reliable high-speed Internet to up to 822 households in five Indigenous and remote communities across Ontario. The Universal Broadband Fund is a \$3.225 billion program with the objective of helping provide high-speed Internet access to 98% of Canadian households by the end of 2026 and 100% access by 2030.

New Laws

Sep 15: The federal government awarded \$4 million in funding for two clean fuels projects in the Greater Toronto Area: i. \$2 million to Next Hydrogen to develop a scalable fabrication process and improve the efficiency, performance, and cost of electrolyzer modules; and ii. \$2 million to CERT Systems to advance a process for converting captured carbon dioxide into ethylene for sustainable aviation fuel.

New Laws

Aug 24: The federal Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources announced that it's investing nearly \$19 million in support for StormFisher Environmental Ltd., a subsidiary of Generate Upcycle, to expand its facility in London, Ontario. The London Digester, the largest food waste anaerobic digestion facility in Canada, produces renewable natural gas (RNG) from municipal source-separated organics and industrial, commercial, institutional food, and beverage waste.

New Laws

Sep 2: Ontario is investing \$17.3 million in projects to modernize forest sector manufacturing that are expected to create six good-paying jobs, protect over 320 existing positions, and support more than 600 indirect jobs. The recipients include Interfor (\$9.6 million), GreenFirst Forest Products (\$5.9 million), and Atlantic Power (\$180,000).

New Laws

Sep 1: Ontario is investing nearly \$1.9 million to strengthen its nuclear supply chain. Led by the led by the Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries (OCNI), the two-year “nuclear build-out” will support up to 150,000 workers and generate more than \$800 billion in additional gross domestic product. It will unfold in three phases: Phase 1: Develop a comprehensive inventory of Ontario's nuclear supply chain, workforce capacity and adjacent industries; Phase 2: Identify critical workforce, manufacturing, engineering, and supply chain gaps; Phase 3: Make recommendations to strengthen Ontario's nuclear supplier base, increase Ontario content in nuclear projects, and expand workforce and training pathways.

Training

Sep 2: The Ontario Skills Development Fund (SDF) Training Stream awarded nearly \$3.9 million to support four training projects designed to help more than 310 women, including survivors of gender-based violence and others facing barriers to employment, access training, and prepare for skilled trades careers. The recipients: Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region, The Redwood for Women and Children Fleeing Abuse, the Canadian Association of Women in Construction, and Metro Labour Education and Skills Training Centre.

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

Workers' Compensation

Sep 21: The Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) began implementing revised rules governing workers' compensation coverage of costs incurred by injured workers for independent living. The new rules affect nine separate [WSIB policies](#)—17-06-01 to 17-06-09.

CASES

Employment Contract: Temporary Layoff Clause Is Enforceable Even If Termination Notice Limit Isn't

Ontario's highest court drew an important line by ruling that a properly drafted temporary layoff clause is distinct from a termination provision and remains enforceable even if other termination clauses in the contract are invalid. The case involved an employee whose contract included a clause allowing the company to temporarily lay him off if it faced financial difficulties. That's just what happened. The employee claimed the temporary layoff clause was unenforceable and sued for

constructive dismissal. The contract included another provision limiting the employee's termination notice to the *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) minimum if he was terminated without cause, which the employer acknowledged was unenforceable. Since that clause violated the ESA, the employee argued that all of the other termination provisions in the contract were also invalid, including the temporary layoff clause. But the Court disagreed, finding that the clauses were distinct provisions. And unlike the termination notice limits clause, the temporary layoff clause did pass muster under the ESA and was thus enforceable. In addition to dismissing the appeal, the Court ordered the employee to pay the company \$10,000 in legal costs [[Taylor v. Salytics Inc.](#), 2026 ONCA 621 (CanLII), September 3, 2026].

Action Point: *Taylor* is a significant case to the extent it signals that courts won't treat temporary layoff provisions in an employment contract as strictly as limits on termination notice. In other words, the message seems to be that courts will treat clauses that implicate employment standards termination rights separately and that just because one such clause is invalid doesn't automatically mean that all of the others are too. Find out why [contract termination notice limits](#) are so hard to enforce.

Vacation: Denying Last-Minute Vacation Request Is Not Unreasonable

A hospital denied a Registered Respiratory Therapist's (RRT) request to use two vacation days so he could swap shifts with another employee. The union claimed the denial was unreasonable and violated the collective agreement provision stating that "[v]acation quotas related to a vacation schedule shall be determined by the Hospital and shall not be unreasonably restrictive." The Ontario arbitrator disagreed based on evidence indicating that the denial wasn't just the application of a "blanket" policy of not granting vacation time after the schedule for that time has been already posted but a reasoned response to unfilled schedule gaps during the pay period the request covered. Approving the vacation request would have created additional gaps, the arbitrator concluded [[Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation v Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Local 273](#), 2026 CanLII 92803 (ON LA), August 31, 2026].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Vacation Pay Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Health & Safety: Carbon Dioxide Spill Results in Ontario Year-High \$500,000 OHS Fine

Ontario dished out its largest OHS fine of the year against a poultry processing plant after a worker suffered injuries as a result of being exposed to carbon dioxide (CO₂). The victim was in the deli area when a hose carrying CO₂ used to cool products during processing ruptured releasing approximately 16,072 pounds of CO₂ into the area. The company was fined \$500,000 after pleading guilty to failing to have a carbon dioxide sensor and alarm system in place [[Maple Lodge Farms Ltd.](#), [MOL Press Release](#), August 27, 2026].

Labour Relations: Union Can't Grieve Safety Issue that Final OHS Order Has Already Resolved

A probation officer was in the meeting room where a parole offender who was about to be arrested suddenly pulled out a gun and committed suicide. As required by

OHS law, the employer immediately notified the Ministry of Labour (MOL) which investigated the incident and issued a final order requiring the facility to redo its workplace violence assessment. After the reassessment was completed, the union filed a grievance against the employer for violating its collective agreement duty to protect the officer against workplace violence. The employer claimed that the final OHS order resolved all of the issues involved in the grievance, noting that in issuing the order the MOL ruled out any OHS violations that would have run afoul of the employer's safety duties under the collective agreement. The Ontario arbitrator agreed and dismissed the grievance on the basis of "issue estoppel," a rule that bans a party from arguing an issue that's already been decided in a previous case. The appeals court found the arbitrator's ruling reasonable and refused to overturn it [[OPSEU v. The Crown](#), 2026 ONSC 3926 (CanLII), August 13, 2026].