



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Aug 28: To help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) affected by U.S. tariffs, Québec expanded eligibility for Emergency Assistance Program (PAUPME) Customs Tariffs to SMEs with revenues between \$200,000 and \$2 million. A new Program rule also exempts SMEs in the forestry industry from having to demonstrate profitability for at least one of the last two financial years.

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

New Laws

Aug 17: Québec signed an agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador establishing a framework for doubling production of electricity at affordable costs. Details: Renewal of the Churchill Falls contract for 51 years; Completion of the Gull Island project, the largest hydroelectric project in North America; and Feasibility studies for a wind farm project and the addition of a power plant near Churchill Falls.

New Laws

Aug 18: The Governments of Canada and Québec announced a joint investment of \$22 million over three years through the Canada–Québec Agreement to Strengthen Community Resilience to Wildfires by Implementing Governance and Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Projects. The funding will be used to help communities identify and implement measures to prevent wildfire-related risks, such as managing vegetation and other combustibles near homes and critical infrastructure, strengthening municipal public safety plans and training, and increasing public awareness.

Health & Safety

Aug 26: The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) [proposed](#) new OHS respiratory protections for non-infectious bioaerosols, including a ban on the presence of visible mould contamination at various workstations. The regulations also revise lighting requirements for workstations and allow for the use of options other than bleach for the disinfection of confined spaces. Deadline to comment: October 10.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Arbitrator Upholds HQ's Strict Anti-Drug Policy for Safety-Sensitive Workers

The long-running legal battle over Hydro-Québec's (HQ) policy banning employees from being impaired by alcohol or drugs while at work, on the premises, on HQ

property, or while using HQ vehicles continued. At issue in the latest case was the third version of the policy adopted in 2020, which the union contended was discriminatory and invasive of workers' privacy rights and physical integrity, particularly. The Québec arbitrator rendered a mixed decision, upholding the 2020 policy and HQ's right to implement a strict anti-drug and alcohol policy to ensure safety but also finding that the testing provisions, bans on possession, management right to remove a worker suspected of impairment, and requirement that workers disclose their addictions contained in the previous versions of the policy went too far [*Hydro-Québec v. Syndicat des technologues d'Hydro-Québec, section locale 957 scfp*, 2026 CanLII 93175 (QC SAT), August 17, 2026].

Action Point: While encouraging employees to voluntarily disclose their drug and alcohol addictions is highly advisable, requiring them to do so is far more problematic. Find out [how to create and implement a legally sound Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) at your workplace.

Payroll: Temporary Staffing Agency, Director Fined \$2.1 Million for Payroll Tax Evasion

Québec fined a temporary staffing agency and its director \$1.077 million apiece after each defendant was convicted on seven counts of tax fraud. The director was also sentenced to 36 months in prison. Revenu Québec investigators found that the agency and sole director willfully evaded their obligations to pay all the taxes, duties, and source deductions owed on its workers, most of whom were paid in cash [*Alpha et Omega Multiservices Inc.*, [Revenu Québec Press Release](#), August 31, 2026].

Discipline: OK to Fire Forklift Operator with Disciplinary Record for Ignoring a Stop Sign

A pork cutting plant fired a veteran forklift operator for deliberately failing to stop at a pedestrian intersection. During the hearing the operator acknowledged that he never makes the stops in question because the plant layout makes them unnecessary. The Québec arbitrator ruled that termination was justified given the seriousness of the offence, the operator's recent 10-day suspension for an OHS offence coupled with a warning that further violations would result in dismissal, and the fact that the violation occurred less than two months after the plant OHS coordinator reminded the operator of the need to stop at every stop sign [*United Food and Commercial Workers International, Local 1991 v. Olymel SEC*, 2026 CanLII 85987 (QC SAT), August 11, 2026].

Action Point: The employer won because it was able to document that it had a fair and consistently enforced progressive discipline policy. Find out how to implement a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace that you can use to enforce safety and other HR rules and policies.