

## JULY 2023 MONTH IN REVIEW

# Québec

### LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Labour Standards

Jun 1: Québec passed Bill 19. Highlights: i. Ban on employment of children under age 14 except in extraordinary cases; ii. Limit on children subject to compulsory school attendance to 10 hours of work from Monday to Friday and 17 hours per week; and iii. Double maximum fines to \$1,200 for first offence and \$12,000 for repeat offence.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [minimum age requirements](#) across Canada

#### Payroll

Jun 6: Revenu Québec said it will show leniency to businesses and individuals who can't meet tax filing and remitting deadlines because of the recent wildfires. Taxpayers also have the right to seek relief by completing the [MR-94.1](#) Request for Cancellation or Waiver of Interest, Penalties or Fees application.

#### Workers Comp

Jun 18: CNESST officially reduced the 2024 average contribution rate for the Occupational Health and Safety Fund (FSST) by 2 cents to an all-time low of \$1.48 per \$100 of payroll. The reduction is possible because despite the lousy economy, the Occupational Health and Safety Plan has an effective capitalization rate of 121.6%.

### CASES

**Telecommuting: Employer Can Require Telecommuters to Work at Office Once a Week**

After the pandemic, an insurance company adopted a hybrid work policy requiring that employees in certain customer services departments work at the office one day a week. The employees objected and the union filed a grievance, claiming that the new policy violated the collective agreement ban on taking away the right to telework except in limited circumstances where the employer could demonstrate the overriding client need that employees be at the office. At least that's how the union interpreted the agreement. However, the Québec arbitrator read the agreement as giving the employer broader discretion to require employees to be in the office, including "to promote interaction, facilitate the training of newcomers and the learning that comes with proximity." The new one-day-per-week-at-the-office policy met these needs, the arbitrator concluded [[\*Union of employees of SSQ, General Insurance Company \(CSN\) v SSQ, Life Insurance Company inc. \(BENEVA\)\*](#), 2023 CanLII 49448 (QC SAT), June 7, 2023].

**Action Point:** Implement a [legally sound telecommuting policy](#) at your workplace