

OCTOBER 2024 MONTH IN REVIEW

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leaves of Absence

Sep 20: Newly passed [Bill 464](#), the *Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act*, amends the *Labour Standards Code* to provide employees with at least 3 months' service and who are diagnosed with a serious illness unpaid leave of up to 27 weeks to be taken in increments of at least one week starting on the day of diagnosis or the first day of absence if the employee was already absent due to the serious illness before it was diagnosed.

Action Point: Find out about the [current paid sick leave rules across Canada](#).

Leaves of Absence

Sep 20: Newly passed [Bill 464](#) replaces *Labour Standards Code* 3 days' unpaid sick leave with Family Responsibility Leave of up to 5 unpaid days if the employee is sick or injured; and up to 3 unpaid days for medical, dental, or other appointments during work hours, or a child, parent, or family member's sickness or injury.

Action Point: Use the HRI [Compassionate Care Leave Policy](#) template to create your own policy.

Leaves of Absence

Sep 12: The First Reading for [Private Member Bill 483](#) occurred, proposing to amend the *Labour Standards Code* by replacing indeterminate unpaid emergency leave with up to 10 days emergency leave, with the first 5 days being paid leave and the remainder unpaid.

New Laws

Sep 5: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill 465](#), the *HST Reduction Act*, would require the province to notify the federal government of its desire to cut the PVAT Rate from 10% to 8%, effective April 1, 2025.

Health & Safety

Sep 13: Workplace injury rates resulting in 3 or more missed workdays in the province declined slightly in the first quarter of 2024 from 1.40 to 1.37 per 100 covered workers, according to WCB's new quarterly report. For every 100 workers covered, 259 days were lost to workplace injury, versus 277 in the first quarter of 2023. Regrettably, there were also 6 workplace deaths during the period, 3 acute and 3 health-related.

Action Item: Find out [how to create a vibrant safety culture](#) at your company.

Workplace Harassment

Sep 20: Newly passed legislation, [Bill 464](#), the *Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act*, adds a new provision to the *OHS Act* requiring employers to create and implement a policy to prevent harassment in the workplace with the details to be furnished via regulations developed after the law passes.

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

Workplace Harassment

Sep 1: New workers' comp coverage rules for gradual onset psychological injury officially took effect in Nova Scotia. Such injuries typically result from exposure to significant workplace stressors that occur over time, like bullying and harassment. Previously, psychological injury was covered only if it happened as a result of a discrete traumatic event.

Action Item: Find out about [workers' comp coverage of mental stress claims](#) across Canada.

Workers' Comp

Sep 1: Nova Scotia increased workers' comp funeral benefits for families of workers that die as a result of workplace injuries or illnesses from \$4,000 to \$15,000, effective today.

Workers' Comp

Aug 30: The Nova Scotia WCB announced that it's keeping 2025 average workers' comp premiums at \$2.65 per \$100 assessable payroll, among the highest rates in Canada. Actual rates will decrease or stay the same for 71% of employers and increase for 29%. Nursing care, home care, and disability support sector rates will decrease for the second year in a row.

Workers' Comp

Sep 20: The Nova Scotia Assembly passed [Bill 464](#) requiring, among other things, that employers and injured workers to take specific actions to cooperate in a worker's return to work while authorizing the WCB to impose penalties against those who fail to cooperate. The legislation is similar to workers' comp return to work laws in other jurisdictions, including BC and Ontario.

Action Item: Find out about your [duty to re-employ](#) injured workers.