

# Québec

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Jan 31: Québec announced that the general minimum wage will increase 35 cents to \$16.10 per hour on May 1. The tip earner minimum wage will increase 30 cents to \$12.90. The same 2.38% increase will apply to pickers of strawberries (\$1.28 per kilogram) and raspberries (\$4.78 per kilogram).

### Labour Relations

Feb 12: [Bill 88](#) passed and went into effect. The legislation changes the rules for settling collective agreement disputes involving municipal police officers and firefighters by requiring that negotiation disputes be referred to an arbitrator rather than a dispute settlement composed of members appointed by the Government of Québec.

### Labour Relations

Feb 19: Newly tabled [Bill 89](#) proposes to give the government the power to issue a decree declaring a particular union or employer as being subject to *Labour Code* restrictions on strikes and lockouts that affect essential public services. If the Administrative Labour Tribunal upholds the decree, the employer and union would then have 15 days to negotiate the services to be maintained and the manner of providing them. If they don't, the Tribunal would establish the list of services. The Bill would also authorize the MOL to submit a dispute over working conditions to arbitration.

### Labour Relations

Feb 19: Significant new legislation ([Bill 89](#)) would standardize the requirements related to the exercise of the right to lock out or strike in a public service that's not subject to a decision of the Administrative Labour Tribunal to maintain essential services. Result: Lockouts could be triggered under the same conditions as strikes, that is, following prior written notice of at least 7 clear working days.

### Immigration

Jan 30: Newly tabled [Bill 84](#) would establish a model for integrating immigrants and cultural minorities into Québec society and French language culture. The bill also outlines what's expected of the Québec State and Québécois, especially immigrants.

**Action Point:** Find out about the 10 things employers [need to know about hiring temporary foreign workers](#).

### New Laws

Feb 6: The Government of Canada announced that it will provide up to \$43.5 million to support Québec's critical minerals sector. The money will be funneled through the

Critical Minerals Infrastructure Fund (CMIF) for clean energy and transportation infrastructure projects, and the Critical Minerals Research, Development, and Demonstration (CMRDD) program designed to advance the commercial readiness of emerging mineral processing unit operations or technologies for development of zero-emission-vehicle value chains.

### **New Laws**

Feb 24: In response to U.S. tariffs, Québec will promote local industry by tightening its procurement rules governing acquisitions by ministries and public bodies, including on online purchasing platforms. The manager will now have to authorize such acquisitions and transmit the authorization to the Treasury Board Secretariat. Public bodies will also have to adopt internal guidelines for Québec purchases.

### **New Laws**

Jan 29: Québec and the federal government will jointly invest \$64 million over the next 3 years to support the province's efforts to combat wildfires more effectively. The money, which will come from the Fighting and Managing Wildfires in a Changing Climate Program (FMWCC), will be used to hire new firefighters and purchase wildfire firefighting vehicles, drones, telecommunications, and other equipment.

### **New Laws**

Jan 30: Québec announced that it will invest more than \$19 million over the next 3 years to support regional export promotion organizations that help entrepreneurs develop new businesses to sell goods and services in foreign markets.

### **Health & Safety**

Feb 6: CNESST published [new regulations](#) changing OHS fall protection rules at construction sites. Highlights include clarification on the hierarchy of fall protection measures required when installing guardrails isn't possible or appropriate, and updated requirements for safety nets in line with ANSI-ASSE A10.11 and NF EN 1263, parts 1 and 2. Effective date: April 6.

Feb 6: [New OHS regulations](#) clarify that rescuing workers from a fall at construction sites is the prime contractor's responsibility. They also require the prime contractor to develop rescue procedures that prioritize use of personal lifting devices and freeing workers within 15 minutes. Other key changes include new on-site training requirements and the requirement that there be at least one rescue worker with training to free a worker suspended in a net available at the site. Effective date: April 6.

### **Workers' Comp**

Mar 15: That's the last day for Québec employers to submit their workers' comp data payroll reports to CNESST listing actual 2024 payroll expenses and estimated expenses for 2025 to avoid the risk of potential late fees, interest, and penalties.

## CASES

### **Termination: OK to Lay Off Experienced Crane Operator Due to Lack of Work**

A contractor laid off a crane operator who was scheduled to work on a construction site for the entire season due to lack of work. The union thought the lack of work excuse was a pretext, especially since the contractor kept 2 crane operators with less experience and who lived farther away from the site. The Québec arbitrator sided with the contractor. The evidence showed that there really was a lack of work at the site and that the 3 operators the contractor hired were too many for the work. While going with less experienced operators might not sit well with the union, all 3 operators were competent and, legally, the contractor had broad latitude in deciding which to keep and which to let go [[Union of Heavy Machinery Operators, local 791 c Groupe Sema Structures Ferroviaires inc.](#), 2025 CanLII 6269 (QC SAT), February 3, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [termination notice compliance game plan](#) at your company.

### **Workplace Harassment: Junior Hockey League Wins Latest Round of Abuse Class Action**

Last April, a court gave the greenlight for a class action lawsuit against the Québec Major Junior Hockey League on behalf of “all hockey players who were abused while they were minors and playing” in the League since 1969. The court later ordered the League to disclose sets of confidential documents to the plaintiffs. The League appealed and now the province’s top court, the Court of Appeal, has nixed the plaintiff’s request to dismiss those appeals [[Latulippe v. Canadian Hockey League](#), 2025 QCCA 185 (CanLII), February 19, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Harassment Prevention and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

### **Labour Relations: OK for City to Assign Firefighters New Administrative Duties**

After the pandemic, the City of Gatineau resumed its practice of implementing specific intervention plans (PPI) for firefighting at high and very high-risk buildings, but with a new format. From now on, operations officers would be responsible for completing the PPI document and inserting the information collected upon their return from a site visit. Until then, the city used lieutenant inspectors-investigators to perform this task. The union claimed that this unilateral change violated the collective agreement by assigning additional work to operations officers whose primary job role is to fight fires. The City claimed the change was a reasonable exercise of its management discretion and the Québec arbitrator agreed, finding that the new PPI responsibilities satisfied the 3 criteria for making reasonable changes to workers’ duties: i. they were business-related tasks; ii. it was reasonable to require those duties taking into account the job held; and iii. they were an extension of the tasks for which the operations officers were expressly hired [[Gatineau Firefighters Association v. Gatineau \(City\)](#), 2025 CanLII 5046 (QC SAT), January 28, 2025].