

# New Brunswick

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Apr 1: To adjust for inflation, New Brunswick officially increased its general minimum wage by 35 cents to \$15.65 per hour. Six percent of all employees in the province earned the minimum wage last year, down from 6.7% in 2023.

**Action Point:** Find out about the latest round of [minimum wage increases](#) taking effect across Canada this Spring.

### New Laws

Feb 21: The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency announced a federal investment of over \$3 million via the Community Futures Program that will enable 10 Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) in New Brunswick to offer essential financial assistance, specialized training, expert guidance, and customized local initiatives to rural businesses, organizations, and communities in the province.

### New Laws

Mar 25: Newly tabled [Bill 14](#) would amend the *Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act* to make it easier for skilled workers and professionals who are registered or licensed in another province to get their credentials recognized so they can ply their trade in New Brunswick.

### New Laws

Mar 6: The Governments of Canada and New Brunswick announced over \$13.3 million in Atlantic Fisheries Fund funding for 9 projects to support innovation in the province's fisheries sector.

### New Laws

Mar 12: New Brunswick announced that the first cohort of 10 internationally trained family physician candidates has gained licensing to practice in the province through the new Practice Ready Assessment program. New Brunswick relies heavily on international physicians with roughly one-third of all licensed physicians in the province holding a medical degree from outside of Canada.

### Employment Benefits

Mar 21: New Brunswick's Liberal Government tabled [Bill 12](#) to repeal legislation adopted by the Progressive Conservatives in 2023 to force 5 unions into a shared-risk pension plan. The CUPE filed a lawsuit challenging the legislation as a violation of Charter rights. Transition to transfer pensions hasn't started yet. So, once the PC legislation is repealed, the government and unions will have to resolve their outstanding pensions issues at the negotiating table.

## Employment Benefits

Feb 28: Speaking of shared-risk plans, the New Brunswick Superintendent of Pensions issued [guidelines](#) on the transfer of assets from a pension plan subject to the *Pension Benefits Act* to a shared risk plan and what the parties involved must do to secure the Superintendent's consent to such a transfer.

## Discrimination

Mar 21: The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission published a new [Guideline on Race Discrimination](#) explaining the laws banning racially discriminatory practices in employment and recommending best practices that employers can follow to avoid engaging in them.

**Action Point:** Beware of certain kinds of seemingly legitimate [employment practices](#) that may have the effect of inadvertently perpetuating racial discrimination and increasing your liability risks.

## Labour Relations

Mar 5: New Brunswick and Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1190 signed a new 4-year collective agreement covering over 2,100 public employees. The agreement, which is retroactive to 2022, provides for hourly wage increases of \$1.00 in year one, \$1.10 in year two, \$1.30 in year three, and \$1.60 for year four (which ends in December 2025). It also increases allowances for boots and tools and provides for recognition and retention premiums for employees with 15 or more years of service.

## Drugs & Alcohol

Mar 7: New Brunswick will receive an estimated total share of \$614 million under the new landmark \$32.5 billion tobacco companies' settlement, including approximately \$147 million up front and the remainder over time.

**Action Point:** Find out how to comply with [workplace smoking laws](#).

## CASES

### Termination: Wrongful Dismissal v. Voluntary Resignation Case Must Go to Trial

A car dealer asked an employee with 35 years of service to sign a modified contract reducing his compensation. The employee said no and stayed on the job. A few months later, the dealer sent him a letter purporting to change his compensation unilaterally, effective in 5 days. Exactly what happened next was unclear other than the fact that the employee pushed back on the changes and stopped working for the dealer a few days later. The employee sued for wrongful dismissal; the dealer insisted he voluntarily resigned. The employee moved for summary judgment, that is, a favourable ruling on the basis of the pleadings without a trial. But the New Brunswick court said no finding that the evidence wasn't definitive in either direction and that a trial would be necessary to determine what actually happened [[Boone v Obeya Motors Inc.](#), 2025 NBKB 46 (CanLII), February 21, 2025].

**Action Point:** An employee's intent to resign must be clear and unambiguous. Simply assuming that an employee who stops working for you has resigned or quit can

backfire. If that assumption turns out to be wrong, you face risk of liability for wrongful dismissal. Find out more about the [law of resignation](#) to avoid falling into this trap.