

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Apr 1: The federal minimum wage for employees subject to the *Canada Labour Code* increased 45 cents to \$17.75 per hour, unless the work is carried out in a province or territory with a higher minimum wage. There are currently only 2 jurisdictions with a minimum wage above \$17.75—Nunavut at \$19.00 and Yukon at \$17.94.

Action Point: Find out how the [federal minimum wage rules](#) work.

Pay Equity

Jun 30: That's the deadline for most federally regulated non-union employers to submit their first pay equity annual statements to the Pay Equity Commission. Annual statements will then be due by June 30 of each year after that. The Commission recently stated that it expects to complete the first blitz audit before the June 30, 2025 deadline.

Action Item: Find out the 8 things you must know to comply with the [federal pay equity law](#).

New Laws

May 7: To relieve Canadian businesses hurt by the recent Trump tariff countermeasures, the federal government [announced](#) that it will temporarily remit the surtax on goods used by the manufacturing, processing, food and beverage packaging, health care and other sectors. Remission will apply to goods imported into Canada before October 16, 2025.

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

Payroll

May 27: The federal government will soon propose a middle-class income tax cut bill that would reduce the lowest marginal personal income tax rate from 15% to 14%, effective July 1, 2025. The reduced rate will apply to the first \$57,375 in taxable income earned, regardless of the individual's total income for the year.

Privacy

May 12: The Privacy Commissioner of Canada launched an exploratory consultation asking for public feedback on whether there should be a separate privacy code to protect the personal information of children in the digital world. Deadline [to comment](#): August 5.

CASES

Health & Safety: Not Letting Safety Committee Inspect Vessels Violates OHS Laws

A shipping terminal foreman complained that a BC stevedore company was conducting inspections of vessels without allowing worker members of the JHSC to participate as required by federal OHS laws. The government investigator concluded that the complaint was true and ordered the company to correct the violation. The Industrial Labour Relations Board upheld the order, and the case went to a federal court which rejected the appeal. The company's occasional refusals to let worker members take part in vessel inspections violated Section 135(7)(e) of the *Canada Labour Code* giving workplace committees the right to "participate in all of the inquiries, investigations, studies and inspections pertaining to the health and safety of employees" in parts of the workplace under the employer's "control." While the company didn't have total control over the vessels, it did have enough control to inspect them which in this situation was enough to trigger the JHSC's Section 135(7)(e) right to participate [[*GCT Canada Limited Partnership v. International Longshore and Warehouse Union Ship and Dock Foremen, Local 514*](#), 2025 FCA 100 (CanLII), May 22, 2025].

Drugs & Alcohol: Shipping Company Took Too Long to Suspend Crew for Onboard Drug Use

In response to allegations about crew members using alcohol and drugs during Arctic voyages, a shipping company hired a private company to investigate the vessel. The 3-hour investigation, which took place on September 28, uncovered narcotics, empty beer bottles and other evidence of drug and alcohol use in several cabins. On October 23, the company announced 30-day suspensions against the implicated crew members. The union cried foul, claiming the company violated its obligation under the collective agreement to impose any disciplinary actions within 10 days of the conduct giving rise to them. The company contended that the 10-day clock began ticking on October 20, the date it received the investigator's report, rather than the day the investigation took place. The federal arbitrator upheld the grievance. The company knew right away that the investigator had found incriminating evidence and didn't need the final report to determine that discipline was justified. Its real reason for delay was to avoid compromising the ship's final voyage to the Arctic scheduled to begin the day after the investigation. **Result:** The suspensions were null and void and the company had to pay the costs of the arbitration [[*Canadian Seafarers International Union v Desgagnés marine cargo inc.*](#), 2025 CanLII 37584 (CA SA), April 28, 2025].

Action Point: Find out [how to create a legally sound drug testing policy](#) at your workplace and get a template policy you can adapt for your own situation.

Labour Relations: Locked Out Employees Don't Qualify for EI Unemployment Benefits

Under the *Employment Insurance Act*, employees don't get unemployment benefits for employment they lose due to a work stoppage attributable to a labour dispute. A tribunal cited the rule in denying EI benefits to employees who were locked out by

their employer during a labour dispute. While finding that there was a labour dispute, the appeals board ruled that there was no work stoppage because the employer was able to continue operations during the lockout by redeploying non-union staff, contractors and summer students. The employer won the next round when the Appeal Division found that there was a work stoppage and restored the initial denial of benefits. But the case still wasn't over until the federal court had the fourth, and presumably final word, in finding the Appeal Division's ruling reasonable and refusing to reverse it in the employees' favour [*Greening v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2025 FCA 95 (CanLII), May 13, 2025].