

# Ontario

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Privacy

Jul 1: Important new *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* regulations took effect requiring Ontario provincial institutions to assess data privacy breaches against a so-called real risk of significant harm (RROSH) threshold and report breaches that meet the RROSH threshold to the Information and Privacy Commission as soon as feasible.

**Action Point:** Find out about the 12 things you should do to [prevent employee data breaches](#) at your workplace.

### Employment Standards

Aug 1: [Comments](#) closed on a proposal to require temporary help agencies to renew their recruiter license every 2 years, rather than every year as the *Employment Standards Act* currently provides. The application fee would also go from \$750 per year to \$1,500 every 2 years. If approved, the changes will take effect on January 1, 2026.

### Employment Standards

Aug 22: That's the deadline to comment on a [proposal](#) to create new regulations to prevent talent agencies in the live, screen-based and recorded entertainment industries from financially exploiting the performers they represent. The rules would require talent agents to get licenses and provide greater transparency on how they handle their clients' funds.

### Labour Relations

Jul 15: The Ontario Labour Relations Board published a new [Information Bulletin](#) explaining what happens when a worker or operator of a digital platform, or director of a digital platform operator applies for a review of a decision of a Compliance Officer under the new *Digital Platform Workers' Rights Act*, 2022, which took effect on July 1 to clarify the collective bargaining and other employment rights of gig workers.

**Action Point:** Find out more about the [new Ontario gig worker protection law](#) and what you must do to comply with it.

### Discrimination

Jul 17: The Ontario Human Rights Commission published [new guidance](#) on recognizing, preventing and remedying discrimination and harassment of Indigenous people in retail settings. Indigenous people often experience racism and consumer racial profiling in department stores, supermarkets, pharmacies, convenience stores, malls, shopping centres, independent stores, and other retail sites, the Commission advises.

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

## **Discrimination**

Jul 2: The recent calls to reverse and eliminate workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs are “misplaced,” according to a new Ontario Human Rights Commission [statement](#). The Commission calls on corporations to “prioritize DEI as a key business strategy to help foster a sense of belonging within the workplace, the community and the province.”

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [diversity, equity and inclusion policy](#) at your workplace.

## **New Laws**

Jul 7: To protect jobs in the forestry sector, the Forest Biomass Program will invest over \$9.1 million in 5 research, innovation and modernization projects across Eastern Ontario.

## **New Laws**

Jul 22: Saskatchewan joined the new Memorandum of Understanding signed by Ontario and Alberta earlier this month establishing a framework for the provinces to work together to develop strategic trade corridors and energy infrastructure to connect each province’s oil, gas and critical minerals to global markets. The 3 provinces will also collaborate on nuclear energy development. A second agreement aims to reduce barriers to interprovincial trade of liquor products.

## **New Laws**

Sep 24: That’s the deadline [to apply](#) for funding under the new [Rural Ontario Development \(ROD\) program](#) supporting projects to promote economic growth, protect jobs and improve infrastructure in small communities under 4 streams: Economic Diversification, Competitiveness and Capacity Building; Workforce Development, Attraction and Retention; Community Infrastructure Enhancements; and Business Development.

## **Training**

Jul 29: The newly launched sixth round of Ontario’s [Skills Development Fund](#) (SDF) Training stream will provide \$260 million for innovative projects that support the hiring, training, and upskilling of workers in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, automotive, and other skilled trades. Deadline [to apply](#): October 1, 2025.

## **Drugs & Alcohol**

Jul 1: New regulations took effect authorizing “pedal pubs” in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor to serve alcohol, provided that they have enough space for at least 12 people. A pedal pub is a large quadricycle that carries tourists and others traveling between restaurants and bars.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [fitness for duty policy to control substance abuse](#) at your workplace.

## **Workers’ Comp**

Jul 1: Newly effective [workers’ comp amendments](#) expand the presumption of work-relatedness for primary-site kidney cancer and primary-site colorectal cancer in

firefighters and fire investigators. The kidney cancer presumption applies after only 10 years of employment or volunteer service before diagnosis, as opposed to 20 years under previous rules. The amendments also eliminate the requirement that primary-site colorectal cancer be diagnosed before the age of 61.

## CASES

### **Labour Relations: Union Can't Sue Employer for Work Injuries Damages**

The union filed a grievance against a hospital demanding damages for exposing lab technicians to dust containing a toxic phenol/formaldehyde resin. The hospital claimed the grievance was barred by workers' comp. The Ontario arbitrator agreed and dismissed the money damages claims. Try as it might to disguise it as a labour grievance against the hospital for violating its OHS and collective agreement safety duties, this case was essentially a lawsuit for money damages in connection with a work injury subject to the workers' comp bar [[Kingston Health Sciences Centre v Ontario Public Service Employees' Union, Local 4106](#), 2025 CanLII 67201 (ON LA), July 10, 2025].

### **Employment Standards: Employer Fined \$62K for Failure to Pay Wages, Reprisals**

The Ontario MOL issued 6 orders against an employer whom Employment Standards investigators concluded had failed to pay wages to 2 employees and then fired for asserting their ESA rights. After ignoring the orders, the employer was found guilty of failure to comply with an Employment Standards officer's orders and fined \$62,000 [[Shawn Roy Lightfoot, operating as The Project Kings, MOL Press Release](#), July 9, 2025].

### **Health & Safety: High Court Finds Crane Operator Not Guilty of OHS Charges**

Miraculously, nobody got hurt when 8 spools of elevator cable weighing about 4,000 pounds being hoisted onto the roof of a tower broke free and crashed 300 feet to the ground near a Walmart store. The MOL charged the worker acting as the "swamper" for the operation with 4 OHS violations but the court dismissed all charges, finding that the evidence showed that the incident happened because the pallets holding the spools failed not because the worker didn't fulfill his OHS swamper duties. The case reached the Ontario Court of Appeal which rejected the Crown's appeal and upheld the directed verdict in the worker's favour [[Ontario \(Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development\) v. Benevides](#), 2025 ONCA 426 (CanLII), June 9, 2025].

### **Health & Safety: Hoisting Fatality Costs Construction Subcontractor \$600,000**

A construction worker suffered fatal injuries after being hit by heavy waste concrete blocks that fell from a crane while being hoisted in an improper and dangerous manner. After a trial, the Ontario court found the victim's employer guilty of failing to ensure: i. that the waste concrete was hoisted using attachment points suitable for that use; and ii. that workers were adequately trained and supervised on the hazard of using embedded rebar for hoisting. The result was a fine of \$600,000, the highest OHS fine reported in Ontario so far this year. Two supervisors were also convicted of

OHS violations resulting in fines of \$10,000 and \$15,000 [*Limen Group Const. (2019) Ltd.*, [MOL Press Release](#), June 25, 2025].

**Action Point:** Don't let this happen to you!! Find out [how to create a vibrant safety culture](#) at your company to prevent injuries and massive OHS fines.