

# Ontario

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Oct 1: Ontario's general minimum wage is increasing 40 cents to \$17.60 per hour. Special minimum wage increases: Students under 18: \$16.60; Homeworkers: \$19.35; Hunting & fishing guides: \$88.05 per day (< 5 consecutive hours in a day); and Hunting & fishing guides: \$176.15 per day (5 or more hours in a day, whether or not consecutive).

**Action Point:** Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

### Leaves of Absence

Aug 27: Reminder: Ontario passed but hasn't yet proclaimed effective legislation amending the ESA to provide employees with at least 13 weeks' employment unpaid child placement leave for adoption or the arrival of a child from a surrogate mother. If and when the law takes effect, employers will be required to retain records for an employee taking placement of child leave for 3 years after the day on which the leave expired.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [Maternity and Parental Leave Compliance Game Plan](#) at your company.

### Employment Standards

Sep 22: That's when comments will close on an MOL [proposal](#) to establish 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.

### Employment Benefits

Aug 14: From now through October 14, FSRA will hold [public consultations](#) on its [plan](#) to implement the new regulatory framework for multi-employer pension plans that took effect on January 1, 2025, specifically with regard to: i. reviewing and approving applications to convert defined benefits to target benefits; ii. assessing whether a plan's Provision for Adverse Deviation (PfAD) is in alignment with its funding and benefits policy; and iii. supervising plans that provide target benefits through regular reviews, risk assessments, and ongoing engagement with plan administrators.

### Training

Oct 1: That's the deadline [to apply](#) for funding under the latest round of the Ontario [Skills Development Fund](#) (SDF) Training stream, which 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.

## **Training**

Aug 20: Ontario says it plans to invest \$70 million in expanded training and employment services to protect workers affected by U.S. tariffs, including via support for [Protect Ontario Workers Employment Response](#) (POWER) Centres across the province. Some of the money will also go to enhance training and upskilling services under the Better Jobs Ontario (BJO) program.

## **Training**

Aug 17: Ontario will invest \$75 million to train up to 7,800 additional students at colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes across the province for in-demand jobs in construction and urban planning. The government's objective is to ensure a pipeline of highly skilled construction workers to support its ambitious infrastructure development strategy.

## **New Laws**

Sep 24: That's the deadline [to apply](#) for [Rural Ontario Development \(ROD\) program](#) funding for small communities development projects. There are 4 ROD program streams: Economic Diversification, Competitiveness and Capacity Building; Workforce Development, Attraction and Retention; Community Infrastructure Enhancements; and Business Development.

## **Workplace Violence**

Sep 25: That's the deadline [to comment](#) on proposed [new regulations](#) designed to prevent violence at schools by requiring school boards and school authorities to collect a police record check from employees, service providers, volunteers, and students on educational placements every 5 years, as well as a Vulnerable Sector Check from any of the above who are or will be in a position of trust or authority in relation to pupils.

**Action Point:** Find out how to [avoid legal risks when performing criminal record checks](#) on job applicants and current employees.

## **Health & Safety**

Aug 2: The Ontario MOL published [OHS regulations](#) implementing the new requirement that employers or constructors furnish automated external defibrillators at construction project sites with 20 or more workers that are expected to last at least 3 months. The regs address AED equipment, storage, installation, signage, maintenance, testing, and inspection. Effective date: January 1, 2026.

## **CASES**

### **Termination: OK to Fire Probationary Employee for Lack of Suitability**

A security officer in her probationary period applied and interviewed for 2 Security Watch Official positions but didn't get either one. So, she told management officials expressing her desire to file a formal complaint contending that other candidates were cheating, that she was the most qualified candidate and that the only reason

she didn't get the job was sexism. Her disaffection deepened when management told the union it wanted to extend her probationary period due to "on-going concerns around her professionalism in the workplace." After receiving an email from a co-worker accusing the officer of using a "gendered slur" and creating a toxic work environment, the employer held a non-disciplinary fact-finding meeting to determine what was going on. Two weeks later, it terminated her for lack of suitability. After hearing the evidence, the Ontario arbitrator ruled that the union failed to meet its burden of proving that the employer acted in a bad faith, arbitrary or discriminatory manner in terminating a probationary employee and tossed the grievance. On the contrary, the evidence supported the employer's concerns about the officer's lack of professionalism [[York University v Cupe Local 1356-01](#), 2025 CanLII 78667 (ON LA), July 11, 2025].

**Action Point:** Firing probationary employees isn't as simple as you may think. To [avoid mistakes](#) that can lead to wrongful dismissal liability, you need a clear [Probationary Employment Policy](#) and [Contract Language](#).

### **Discrimination: No Evidence 66-Year-Old Job Applicant Was Rejected Because of His Age**

Mr. R was convinced he was a good fit for the HR Shared Services Manager position he applied for online. So, when the only communication he had with the company was an email rejection notice, he suspected his age—66, which could be determined by the information listed on his resume—was the reason. Unfortunately for Mr. R, that was all the evidence he had. And, as he acknowledged, he had "no data" as to how the company's hiring process worked. Not surprisingly, the Ontario Human Rights Commission dismissed his age discrimination complaint. Evidence of discrimination can be circumstantial but it can't be just a suspicion [[Radeschi v. Giant Tiger Stores Limited](#), 2025 HRTO 2055 (CanLII), August 19, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a [legally sound age discrimination policy](#) at your workplace.

### **Discipline: OK to Suspend but Not Terminate Worker for PPE Infraction**

An aluminum plant worker got fired for not wearing required hearing protection. He was wearing **something** over his ears. The supervisor claimed it was music-playing headphones; the worker said it was earmuff-type hearing protection. After hearing from both sides, the Ontario arbitrator judged that the supervisor's story was more credible and that discipline was appropriate. However, it also found that termination was too harsh a penalty and knocked it down to a 30-calendar day suspension, citing the worker's 6 years of employment and clean disciplinary record over his one-year sunset period [[Dajcor Aluminum Ltd. v Unifor Local 127](#), 2025 CanLII 84753 (ON LA), August 15, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace that you can use to enforce safety and other HR rules and policies.