

Ontario

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Oct 1: Ontario's general minimum wage increased 40 cents to \$17.60 per hour. Other increases: Students under 18: \$16.60 per hour; Homeworkers: \$19.35 per hour; 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.

New Laws

Sep 27: Ontario implemented a hiring freeze across all provincial agencies, boards and commission public bodies. The government noted that since 2023, provincial agencies have grown at a rate of more than 5 times that of the Ontario Public Service, which has been subject to a similar freeze since 2018.

Hiring & Recruiting

Oct 1: Reminder: Ontario employers with 25 or more employees will have to ensure that their job postings include all information required by the new [ESA regulations](#) taking effect on Jan. 1, 2026, including regarding expected compensation, use of AI during the hiring process and whether the posted position is currently vacant.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [Pay Transparency Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace that will help you comply with the new compensation disclosure requirements for public job postings.

New Laws

Aug 29: Newly filed "As of Right" [regulations](#) allow Canadians certified in architecture, engineering and other high-demand professions to begin working in Ontario within 10 days after regulators confirm their credentials, effective January 1, 2026. This is a significant change to current rules requiring workers to wait up to 6 months to be registered and start a job.

New Laws

Sep 26: Ontario announced that it plans to invest an additional \$30 million to support the province's forestry businesses and the workers and communities that depend on them. The extra money, including \$20 million via the Provincial Forest Access Roads Funding Program and \$10 million from the Ontario Sawmill Chip Support Program, is in response to the increase in U.S. softwood lumber duties and threat of tariffs.

Employment Benefits

Aug 29: Ontario DB pension plans remain in a strong position despite the current economic uncertainty, FSRA reports. The median solvency ratio rebounded

increased 3% to 122% during the second quarter, more than offsetting the 5% decline of early April when U.S. tariffs were first announced. The funded position of pension improved, both on a going-concern and solvency basis as compared to the 2023 report.

Employment Benefits

Oct 14: That's the deadline to comment on FSRA's [proposed supervisory guidance](#) on implementation of the target benefit legislative and regulatory framework for multi-employer pension plans (MEPPs), which took effect in Ontario on Jan. 1, 2025.

FSRA continues to work on behalf of all stakeholders, including pension beneficiaries, to ensure financial safety, fairness, and choice for everyone.

Workers' Comp

Sep 26: The Ontario WSIB announced that it's cutting average workers' comp premium rates 2 cents to \$1.23 per \$100 of insurable payroll in 2026. That's the seventh annual premium reduction in the past 10 years. Overall, WSIB rates have fallen more than 50% since 2017. Benefits have also been enhanced during this period.

CASES

Discrimination: Mandatory Vaccination Doesn't Violate Catholic Employee's Creed

An employee claimed that his company's mandatory COVID vaccination policy discriminated on the basis of creed. I'm a Roman Catholic, former altar boy and believer in the 10 commandments and the freedom of choice, he argued. But what he didn't explain was how any of these beliefs prevented him from complying with the mandatory vaccination policy. So, the Ontario Human Rights Commission tossed his claim. The ban on creed discrimination doesn't cover "every belief, opinion, expression, practice, or matter of conscience," the Commission explained [[Burmester v. Stellantis FCA Canada](#), 2025 HRTO 2332 (CanLII), September 18, 2025].

Action Point: Complaints of [creed discrimination](#) are on the rise, particularly in the context of challenging mandatory vaccination policies. Find out more about this fairly unfamiliar form of discrimination protection and what it does and doesn't cover.

Privacy: Driver Fired for Disabling Vehicle Surveillance Camera Gets His Job Back

A waste collection company fired a driver after he admitted to deliberately covering the video camera installed in his truck to ensure safe driving with a cloth glove during his lunch break. "I do it all the time," the driver added. Discipline was in order, the Ontario arbitrator reasoned. The camera was an important piece of safety equipment and the driver showed no remorse for regularly disabling it at lunch. However, as the company acknowledged, he was also "a good driver" and this was his first discipline in 9 years of employment. Although his behaviour was unacceptable, it wasn't enough to conclude that he could never be trusted again,

especially since all he did was cover rather than disable or tamper with the camera. So, the arbitrator knocked the penalty down to a one-year suspension without pay on the understanding that the driver would lose his job if he messed with the camera again [[Teamsters, Local Union 419 v Waste Connections of Canada \(Ajax\)](#), 2025 CanLII 86395 (ON LA), August 15, 2025].

Action Point: This case illustrates the importance of [ensuring that digital solutions used to monitor employees remain within personal privacy boundaries](#) and why you should consider implementing a [legally sound electronic monitoring policy](#).

Health & Safety: Firing JHSC Member for Inciting a Work Refusal Is Illegal Reprisal

A food plant fired the worker co-chair of the JHSC for falsely telling workers that the water at the site was contaminated in a deliberate attempt to “incite” a work refusal. But the Ontario arbitrator found no just cause to terminate and ordered him to be reinstated. The evidence showed that what the worker actually said was that a potable and non-potable water line had crossed on one of the lines and had been shut down. “That is not the same as saying that the water at the plant was contaminated,” the arbitrator explained. Accordingly, the termination was not only wrongful but also an illegal reprisal for engaging in workplace safety activity protected by the OHS laws. Result: The plant had to reinstate the worker with no loss of seniority but it didn’t have to pay punitive damages [[United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union \(United Steelworkers\), Local 4610 v PepsiCo Foods Canada Inc.](#), 2025 CanLII 86379 (ON LA), August 20, 2025].

Action Point: Don’t let this happen to you! Find out how to implement a legally sound [Compliance Game Plan](#) for responding to work refusals at your own workplace.

Health & Safety: Fines from Old Cases Shouldn’t Drive Sentencing for New OHS Violations

A ceramics plant worker trying to correct a conveyor snag lost 4 fingers on her right hand when her glove got ensnared in the machine’s chain and sprocket assembly. The company pled guilty to a machine guarding violation. The company and prosecutor jointly suggested a \$35,000 fine based on old cases involving similar violations dating back as far as 2005. But the court rejected the suggestion. Basing fine ranges on dated cases doesn’t serve the public interest of punishing corporate defendants for OHS violations and deterrence. Such fine ranges need to be adjusted for inflation, the court reasoned, while proposing “a novel five-year threshold for authorities in such matters” [[Ontario \(Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development\) v. Apogee Ceramics Inc.](#), 2025 ONCJ 418 (CanLII), August 6, 2025].