

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Payroll

Oct 22: To support workers affected by tariffs, the federal government again extended the temporary waiver of the one-week waiting period for EI benefits for another 6 months, until April 11, 2026. The same extension applies to the waiver of the rule that claimants use up their severance pay before they receive EI benefits. The [new Regulations](#) also provide 20 additional weeks of EI regular benefits to eligible long-tenured workers who establish claims between June 15, 2025, and April 11, 2026.

Payroll

Oct 10: Starting in the 2026 tax year, the federal government will provide for automatic filing of tax returns of low-income individuals via [CRA's My Account online filing system](#) to ensure they receive the GST/HST credit, Canada Child Benefit, Canada Disability Benefit and other benefits they may not know they're entitled to. The agency will also expand its [Auto-fill my return](#) digital service that helps individuals using certified commercial tax software complete their tax returns.

Payroll

Oct 21: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill C-249](#), which will unlikely pass, amends the *Employment Insurance Act* to provide that the combined weeks of benefits rule doesn't apply to benefits paid because of pregnancy or because the claimant is caring for their new-born child or child placed with them for adoption. It also amends the Act to allow the extension of the benefit period for pregnancy or parental benefits while also increasing the maximum weeks for care or support to critically ill adults from 15 to 26.

Payroll

Oct 21: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill 250](#) would amend the *Canada Labour Code* to require employers to count time that flight attendant employees spend in carrying out their pre-flight and post-flight duties and completing mandatory training programs as compensable work time and pay at least regular wage rates for that time.

Action Point: Find out about the [rules governing whether employees are entitled to be paid for training time](#).

Immigration

Oct 6: In fiscal year 2024–2025, ESDC conducted 1,435 employer Temporary Foreign Worker inspections, finding 10% of employers non-compliant. During the same period, penalties more than doubled from \$2,067,750 to \$4,882,500 and resulted in 36 employers being banned from the TFW Program, a threefold increase from last year. Penalties included a \$1 million fine and 10-year ban against an employer in the fish and seafood sector.

Action Point: Find out what companies and their HR directors need to know to [navigate the immigration law maze](#) and avoid penalties.

Immigration

Oct 24: [Bill C-3](#), which provides for Canadian citizenship by descent by making all persons who were born outside the country citizens of Canada if one of their parents was a citizen before the law takes effect, is in Report stage in the House of Commons. Under the Bill, citizenship by descent beyond the first generation would also be allowed for a Canadian parent who's been physically present in the country for at least 1,095 cumulative days (i.e., 3 years) before their child's birth or adoption.

Immigration

Oct 1: The U.S. government began imposing a new \$350 (CA) Visa Integrity Fee on Canadians entering the country for business or personal travel. While most Canadian citizens won't be affected because they don't need non-immigrant visas to get into the U.S., the Fee may affect those who do, including permanent residents, students or foreign workers in Canada. The Fee is refundable but only upon visa expiration; it's also expected to take years for the U.S. State Department to establish an actual refund process.

Action Point: Find out more about the [new U.S. Visa Integrity Fee](#) and how it might impact your company's business travel costs and arrangements.

Immigration

Nov 30: That's the scheduled expiration date of the temporary waiver of application and biometric fees for foreign emergency services personnel who are coming to Canada to help fight wildfires. Approximately 792 foreign emergency services personnel came to Canada to help fight wildfires in 2024.

New Laws

Oct 23: Second Reading for [Bill C-12](#) proposing a wide range of new legal measures to strengthen Canadian border security and prevent the flow of illegal drugs, human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime.

Labour Relations

Oct 6: Newly tabled [Bill C-247](#) repeals the controversial section of the *Canada Labour Code* that authorizes the Minister of Labour to take measures to promote the settlement of industrial disputes, including referring questions to the Canada Industrial Relations Board or directing the Board to take any measure that the MOL deems necessary.

Training

Oct 3: The federal government will provide the provinces and territories with another \$450 million of Labour Market Development Agreements support over the next 3 years to provide training programs for workers impacted by tariffs. Workers will get access to targeted training and financial assistance while in training to keep their jobs or fill in-demand jobs. This is in addition to the previously announced \$120 million investment for steel and softwood lumber workers.

Employment Benefits

Oct 24: OSFI published the assessment rates for federally registered pooled registered pension plans with plan years ending December 31, 2025: i. Minimum Assessment (<50 beneficiaries): \$600; ii. Assessment (50 to 1,000 beneficiaries): \$12.00 per beneficiary; iii. Additional Assessment: \$9.00 per beneficiary over 1,000 beneficiaries; and iv. Maximum Assessment: \$240,000.

Employment Benefits

Oct 24: OSFI published assessment rates for federally registered pension plans with plan years ending October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026: i. Minimum Assessment (<50 beneficiaries): \$600; ii. Assessment (50 to 1,000 beneficiaries): \$12.00 per beneficiary; iii. Additional Assessment: \$9.00 per beneficiary over 1,000 beneficiaries; and iv. Maximum Assessment: \$240,000.

New Laws

Oct 17: The federal government announced 3 new measures to support businesses affected by U.S. tariffs: i. current exemption from Canadian countermeasures for importing U.S. goods used in manufacturing, processing, or food and beverage packaging extended for 2 more months, and expanded to include goods used in agricultural production; ii. 2 month extension of exemption on imported U.S. goods used to support public health, healthcare, public safety and national security; and iii. further relief from Canadian tariffs on U.S. and China imports for companies can prove they're subject to short supply, existing contractual obligations or other adverse conditions.

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

New Laws

Oct 23: To support the auto industry, the federal government reduced import quotas of General Motors (GM) and Stellantis by 24.2% and 50%, respectively. The move comes after the GM announced that it was scaling back its manufacturing production in Oshawa and at its Ingersoll facilities, and Stellantis' decision to cancel its production plans for the Brampton assembly plant.

Accessibility

Oct 23: The federal government announced that it will provide over \$35 million under the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) support for 564 accessible infrastructure projects across Canada. The EAF will help build more accessible, safe, and inclusive workplaces and communities for people with disabilities. Its small projects component supports construction, renovation and retrofit projects that will help increase accessibility, safety, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Action Point: Find out more about [accessibility laws across Canada](#).

Workplace Harassment

Oct 1: Second Reading for [Bill C-9](#) making it a crime to wilfully promote hatred against any identifiable group by displaying certain symbols in a public place or intentionally obstruct or intimidate a person from attending a mosque or other public place of religious worship and repealing the requirement that the Attorney

General consent to the prosecution of hate propaganda offences.

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

Workplace Violence

Sep 18: Newly tabled [Bill C-225](#) amends the *Criminal Code* to create new offences for engaging in intimate partner violence and ban peace officers from releasing persons arrested for an intimate partner offence if they've committed such an offence in the last 5 years or are at large on a release order for such an offence.

Workplace Violence

Oct 22: In response to the spate of assaults on healthcare workers, the Senate passed [Bill S-233](#) amending the *Criminal Code* to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a person who provides health services or a first responder to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.

Action Point: Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

CASES

Termination: Drug Test Refusal Is Grounds to Deny EI Benefits Even If Employee Was Justified

An employee who got fired for refusing to take a drug test filed for EI benefits. The Social Security Tribunal denied the claim because he lost his job due to misconduct. While admitting that he deliberately refused his employer's demand to be tested, the employee claimed his refusal was justified because the company violated the testing policy. But the federal court rejected his appeal, finding that the Tribunal acted reasonably in determining that the standard for misconduct denial of EI benefits is not that an employee do something wrong but that they engage in conduct that's willful [[Gould v. Canada \(Attorney General\)](#), 2025 FCA 191 (CanLII), October 23, 2025].

Action Point: Find out more about [EI misconduct rules](#) governing terminated employees' eligibility for EI employment benefits.

Health & Safety: Not Signing OHS Refusal Form Is OK When Worker Gives Reasons Orally

A longshore worker refused an order to use a forklift to move 2 pallets of lubricants because the operation would take him too far away from the first aid room to be able to promptly provide first aid as the workplace first aid attendant. Management asked him to fill out and sign a work refusal form, but he refused. He was then suspended pending the refusal investigation and advised to report to the union hall if he wanted to be dispatched to another job. After declining to meet with the company or participate in the investigation, the worker was suspended from all work for 3 days and from dispatch from the refusal site for a full year. The union claimed that the punishment was an illegal reprisal. The company claimed the suspension wasn't for the work refusal but the failure to cooperate in the refusal

process. The federal Board sided with the union. The worker didn't have to fill out a written refusal form since he clearly communicated his reasons for refusing verbally. Nor did he have to participate in the investigation. The company also crossed the line in suspending him before the investigation was over. The company appealed but the court found the Board's ruling reasonable and refused to overturn it [[Pacific Coast Terminals Co. v. Nenad Habus](#), 2025 FCA 152 (CanLII), August 27, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Compliance Game Plan](#) for responding to work refusals at your own workplace.