

# Nova Scotia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Payroll

Oct 3: The Nova Scotia Assembly passed legislation ([Bill 127](#)), making the unauthorized collection, use, and disclosure of a person's Social Insurance Number punishable in fines of up to \$50,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for a corporation. Employers are still allowed to collect, use and disclose SINs for payroll and other legitimate HR functions.

**Action Point:** [Collecting Social Insurance Numbers from new employees](#) can be a tricky process fraught with hidden legal risks. Find out how to do it effectively at your workplace.

### New Laws

Oct 3: Newly passed [Bill 137](#), the *Making Business Easier Act*, gives the government broad authority to adopt new regulations to streamline and simplify the province's apprenticeship and trades qualifications rules and processes.

### New Laws

Oct 7: Nova Scotia eliminated the 5-year certification renewal requirement for journeypersons in most compulsory trades, including plumber, construction electrician and boilermaker, effective immediately. It also cut the cost of certification exams in more than occupations from \$644.15 to \$350, bringing Nova Scotia more in line with other provinces.

### Training

Oct 3: Royal Assent for [Bill 127](#) amending the *Liquor Control Act* to require establishments with a liquor license to perform criminal record checks on bouncers and also verify that bouncers have completed security training to keep both bar staff and patrons safe. The Bill hasn't yet been proclaimed effective.

### Privacy

Oct 3: The Nova Scotia Assembly passed [Bill 150](#), a reinvented and modernized version of its 25-year-old *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOI/POP) Act*. Among other things, the legislation extends oversight of privacy to municipalities and villages, requires public bodies to notify individuals of affected by privacy breaches carrying a significant risk of harm and increases fines for privacy violations. Effective date: April 1, 2027.

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

### Health & Safety

Oct 3: Newly passed workers' comp reform legislation, ([Bill 144](#)), reduces the time by which employers must report a workplace injury to the Nova Scotia WCB from 5 to 2 days while clarifying that employers can access reports on workers' functional

abilities to further return to work after an injury.

**Action Point:** Find out [how to create a vibrant workplace health and safety culture](#) at your company.

### **Workers' Comp**

Oct 3: Although the WCB is keeping the average employer assessment rate at \$2.65 per \$100 in 2026, newly passed [Bill 144](#) paves the way for a rate cut in 2027, the first rate cut in the province in 30 years. The legislation allows for rate changes when the WCB's funded percentage is between 90% and 115%; the WCB's current financial position stands at 106%.

### **Workers' Comp**

Oct 3: In addition to a potential employer rates cut in 2027, newly passed [Bill 144](#) enhances worker benefits, including an increase the cost-of-living adjustment from 50% to 100% of the consumer price index, up to 3% annually. The Bill also extends presumptive cancer coverage to wildland firefighters and fire investigators, expands survivor benefits and allows for benefits to be paid to a deceased worker's estate even when no dependents exist.

## **CASES**

### **Discrimination: Refusing to Serve Maskless Customer During COVID Is Not Creed Discrimination**

A citizen denied services by local businesses during the pandemic because he wouldn't wear a mask claimed he suffered discrimination on the basis of religion and creed (atheism). The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission ruled that the businesses turned him away because he wasn't wearing a mask, as required by public health orders, and not due to his beliefs. So, the citizen appealed and the case landed in the province's highest court, the Court of Appeal, which upheld the Commission's rejection of his discrimination complaint [[Evely v. Nova Scotia \(Human Rights Commission\)](#), 2025 NSCA 73 (CanLII), October 17, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out when you're legally required to make reasonable [accommodations to face mask](#) rules for persons with disabilities.