

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Nov 19: All 14 of Canada's jurisdictions signed an agreement to break down interprovincial trade barriers making it easier for businesses to sell products across the country, and for people to buy Canadian-made goods. The new Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement (CMRA), which takes effect in December, covers thousands of products, from manufacturing inputs and health technologies, to clothing, toys, industrial products, tires, and vehicles. But it doesn't apply to food.

New Laws

Nov 17: The federal government published [regulations](#) implementing newly passed interprovincial free trade and labour mobility legislation. The new laws, which take effect on January 1, provide that goods and services that meet the requirements of a province or territory are recognized as meeting comparable federal requirements and that workers licensed or certified by a province or territory may work in a comparable occupation in the federal jurisdiction.

Payroll

Nov 19: Legislation ([Bill C-4](#)) amending the *Income Tax Act* to reduce the marginal personal income tax rate on the lowest tax bracket to 14.5% for the 2025 taxation year and to 14% for the 2026 and subsequent taxation years has been reported out of Committee. The bill also amends the *Excise Tax Act* to implement a temporary GST new housing rebate for first-time home buyers.

Payroll

Nov 4: The federal government's newly tabled Budget 2025 calls for the creation of a temporary 5-year Personal Support Workers Tax Credit of 5% of eligible income up to \$1,100 per year support. The new tax credit will be available in provinces and territories that aren't covered by a bilateral agreement with the federal government to increase wages for personal support workers.

Immigration

Nov 19: [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, passed the Senate and House of Commons but hasn't yet received Royal Assent. 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.

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

Immigration

Nov 4: Newly proposed Budget 2025 earmarks \$97 million, over 5 years, starting in 2026-27, for the launch of a Foreign Credential Recognition Action Fund to help internationally trained workers get quicker recognition so they can ply their trade in Canada, particularly in the healthcare and construction sectors.

Employment Benefits

Nov 7: First Reading for [Private Member Bill C-256](#) amending private and public pensions laws to allow the survivor of an eligible person to receive pension benefits after the death of the person even if the person and the survivor married or began cohabiting in a conjugal relationship after the person attained the age of 60 years or retired.

New Laws

Nov 10: Ottawa announced plans to invest \$98.2 million over 5 years, starting in 2026-27, and \$9.8 million ongoing, to implement its recently announced Buy Canadian Policy across all federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations. The plan also calls for another \$79.9 million over 5 years to support the Small and Medium Business Procurement Program creating procurement streams for Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises bidding for federal contracts, starting in the defence sector.

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

New Laws

Nov 6: [Bill S-206](#), which requires the Minister of Finance to develop a national framework to provide all persons over the age of 17 in Canada with access to a guaranteed livable basic income has passed Second Reading. The Minister will have to prepare a report setting out the framework within one year and provide annual reports thereafter.

New Laws

Nov 13: From now through February 11, the Competition Bureau will hold comments on updated [Merger Enforcement Guidelines](#) governing how the Bureau reviews proposed mergers and acquisitions to ensure they don't stifle competition.

New Laws

Nov 4: The new federal Budget 2025 includes \$75 million over 3 years, starting in 2026-27, to expand the Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP) to support union-led apprenticeship training in Red Seal trades via equipment upgrades and "innovative projects" to reduce barriers for under-represented groups.

Workplace Violence

Oct 29: 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. The Bill also passed First Reading in the House of Commons.

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

domestic violence.

Health & Safety

Nov 10: The Pan American Health Organization notified the federal government that Canada no longer holds measles elimination status. Canada is experiencing a [large, multi-jurisdictional outbreak of measles](#) that began in October 2024 with cases in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories. While transmission has slowed recently, the outbreak has persisted for over 12 months, primarily within under-vaccinated communities. Canada can re-establish its measles elimination status once transmission of the measles strain associated with the current outbreak is interrupted for at least 12 months.

Action Point: Find out how to create a legally and clinically sound workplace [Exposure Control Plan](#) to protect your employees against the risk of measles and other infectious illnesses.

Health & Safety

Jan 1: January 1st is the final deadline for complying with the new [GHS 7 WHMIS rules](#) revising the hazard information that must be listed on a Safety Data Sheet in Section 9, which describes a hazardous product's physical and chemical properties, and Section 14, which lists transport information.

Action Point: Are you prepared for the January 1 compliance deadline? Find out what you need to know [to comply with the new WHMIS GH 7 requirements](#).

CASES

Wages & Salary: Merchant Ship Officers Get 2% Wage Increase but Not 2% Market Adjustment

The union representing merchant service Ship Officers and the federal government agreed on a 4-year collective agreement except for the salary increase in the final year, 2025. The union accepted the government's offer of a 2025 2% general wage increase but also demanded an additional 2% market adjustment, which it contended was crucial for recruitment and retention given the widening gap with salaries in the public sector. The arbitrator's initial ruling made in 2023 left the 2025 wage increase open due to uncertainty of what the market would be in 2025. We'll see what happens in 2025, the arbitrator basically said setting up the new reward. Result: The arbitrator granted the 2% general wage increase, retroactive to April 2025, but nixed the 2% market adjustment, noting that the Ship Officers already received a 4% market adjustment as part of the earlier award [[Canadian Merchant Service Guild v Treasury Board](#), 2025 CanLII 117048 (CA LA, November 13, 2025)].

Health & Safety: General Fears of COVID Don't Justify 'Frivolous' Work Refusal

A government worker ordered to return to the office at least twice a week after the pandemic initiated a work refusal citing fears of catching COVID. The employer, JHSC and government OHS investigator found no danger, but the worker wouldn't back down and took his case to court. After losing at trial, he appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal, which upheld the ruling that the refusal was "frivolous" and based

on “speculative and hypothetical” fears that ignored the employer’s infection control measures. The Court also noted that the worker didn’t claim “that his workplace was subject to any specific [COVID] risk greater than the risk elsewhere in the government or society in general” [[*Juzda v. Canada \(Attorney General\)*](#)], 2025 FCA 181 (CanLII), October 7, 2025].

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