

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Dec 2: After raising its minimum wage by \$1.30 per hour in 2025, Nova Scotia announced 2 more increases for next year. On April 1, the general minimum wage will increase 25 cents to \$16.75 per hour; it will then rise to \$17.00 per hour on October 1.

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

Minimum Wage

Dec 2: The minimum wage for Logging and Forest Operations will increase twice in 2026. On April 1, minimum wages for time workers will increase from \$16.50 to \$16.75 per hour and for other workers from \$3,243.90 to \$3,293.05 per month to be followed by increases on October 1 to, respectively, \$17.00 per hour and \$3,342.20 per month.

Labour Relations

Dec 1: The Nova Scotia Labour Board updated its [Rules of Procedures](#) for handling applications, complaints and appeals under various workplace laws including the *Labour Standards Code*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and *Trade Union Act*.

New Laws

Dec 17: Nova Scotia updated its [Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations](#). Highlights: i. New 30-day public comment period for new aquaculture sites or expansion of existing ones; ii. New or expanded shellfish and aquatic plant farms to be approved by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department rather than the Nova Scotia Aquaculture Review Board; and iii. Revised timelines and processes for review board handling of applications for finfish in marine areas to give applicants and other parties more time to prepare.

New Laws

Dec 22: Nova Scotia named Dalhousie University to oversee the new \$30 million Subsurface Energy Research and Development Investment Program designed to kick-start the province's onshore natural gas industry. Dalhousie will lead research efforts to better understand the nature and location of the resource and to track and develop guidelines to ensure exploration and development are done responsibly.

Health & Safety

Jan 1: Newly effective *Workers' Compensation Act* amendments require employers to report workplace injuries within 2 days, rather than 5. The Nova Scotia WCB now also has authority to publish the names of employers who receive administrative monetary penalties for OHS and workers' compensation violations.

Health & Safety

Nov 28: The Nova Scotia WCB and Dept. of Labour's newly launched collaborative

injury-prevention strategy sets out 3 priorities for 2025-2026: i. reducing strains and sprains, the province's most common workplace injury; ii. supporting employers in addressing psychological harm, focusing on harassment and traumatic incidents; and iii. equipping supervisors with the tools and confidence to build strong safety cultures.

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

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Under newly effective *Workers' Compensation Act* changes, death benefits will now extend to dependent adult children or other dependents. If the worker who dies of a work injury or illness has no dependents, benefits will go to the worker's estate. In the event of the death of a worker receiving long-term benefits and who's entitled to an annuity, the annuity will be payable to the worker's estate if there are no dependents.

Action Point: Look up the [2026 workers' compensation premium rates](#) in each part of Canada.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Effective today, Extended Earnings Replacement Benefits can be reviewed when a worker's situation changes, which eliminates the requirement under previous rules to wait for the 3-year or 5-year review period to end.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Wildland firefighters and fire investigators in Nova Scotia now have the same presumptive cancer coverage as municipal firefighters. So, if they're diagnosed with a job-related cancer, their claim will be automatically presumed work-related. Coverage applies retroactively to eligible workers diagnosed before the law took effect.

CASES

Termination: Layoff of Seasonal Worker Was Not Reprisal for Filing Workers' Compensation Claim

A delivery driver for an excavation firm claimed he was laid off in retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim. Since the adverse action (the layoff) occurred within 6 months of the protected action (filing the workers' compensation claim), the employer had the burden of proving it wasn't a reprisal. The employer, which had just acquired the company, met that burden by presenting evidence that the business was seasonal and that it planned to use university students to ensure labour would be available during the peak months of April to September. In other words, the driver's layoff was a legitimate business decision that had nothing to do with the workers' comp claim. So, the Nova Scotia arbitrator tossed the driver's reprisal complaint [[Miller v Kynock Resources Limited](#), 2025 NSLB 340 (CanLII), November 25, 2025].

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid payroll errors when dealing with the statutory holiday rights of seasonal workers](#).