

Ontario

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hiring & Recruiting

Jan 1: Effective today, Ontario employers with 25 or more employees must ensure that their job postings include all information required by the new [ESA regulations](#), including regarding expected compensation, use of AI during the hiring process and whether the posted position is currently vacant. Exception: The new requirements don't apply to jobs paying \$200,000 or more.

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.

Hiring & Recruiting

Jan 1: The days of not getting back to job interviewees are over in Ontario where employers with 25 or more employees are now required to notify interviewees for publicly advertised jobs of whether a hiring decision has been made within 45 days of the last interview date. The new [ESA requirement](#) doesn't cover jobs paying \$200,000 or more.

Action Point: Not getting back to the applicants you interview is one of the [10 hiring and recruiting practices that you should stop using right now](#). Find out about the other 9 and why they're problematic.

Hiring & Recruiting

Jan 1: New ESA rules require operators of job posting platforms in Ontario to have displayed in a conspicuous place on the platform: i. a mechanism or procedure for users to report fraudulent publicly advertised job postings; and ii. a written policy that explains how fraudulent publicly advertised job postings will be addressed.

Leaves of Absence

Nov 27: Newly effective [Bill 30](#) requires employers who lay off 50 or more employees to give affected employees up to 3 days' unpaid leave for job search and other related activities. Companies must also furnish laid off employees information about provincial government programs for skills training and job search support.

Action Point: The Ontario law adds a new twist to already tricky employment standards group termination requirements. Find out how to [comply with the group termination rules](#).

Termination

Nov 27: [Bill 30](#), *Working for Workers Seven*, which took effect today, amends the *Employment Standards Act* to allow employers to extend temporary layoffs to 35 or more weeks in a 52-consecutive week period, provided that the employer and employee agree to and the Employment Standards Director approves the arrangement. Extension of temporary layoffs will help companies hold onto key employees during hard financial times.

Action Point: Find out how to comply with [temporary layoff requirements](#).

Leaves of Absence

Nov 27: Ontario passed but hasn't yet proclaimed effective ESA amendments giving employees with at least 13 weeks' employment 16 weeks' unpaid leave for the placement of a child into their custody, care and control for the first time for purposes of adoption or surrogate birth. Employees may start leave up to 6 weeks before the expected placement date. Employers must retain leave records for 3 years after the day on which the leave expires.

Employment Standards

Jan 1: [New ESA Licensing Regulations](#) increase the fee for applying for or renewing a temporary help agency operating licence and recruiter licence from \$750 to \$1,500, while also requiring licence renewal every 2 years rather than every year.

Payroll

Nov 27: The newly passed Ontario [budget bill](#) amends the *Employer Health Tax Act* to provide that the deadline for delivering returns for a year for employers who cease to have a permanent establishment in Ontario as a result of an amalgamation under section 87 of the *Income Tax Act (Canada)* is 6 months after the date of the amalgamation or March 15 of the following year, whichever day comes earlier.

Employment Benefits

Nov 27: The new Ontario budget bill ([Bill 68](#)) sets new *Pensions Benefits Act* rules on employers seeking to convert a single employer pension plan into a jointly sponsored pension plan. The Bill also gives members of the single employer plan the right to elect not to transfer their own benefits to the new plan.

New Laws

Dec 19: Ontario published its new free trade and labour mobility [regulations](#) providing for recognition of goods and services from other Canadian jurisdictions that have enacted legislation mutually recognizing Ontario goods and services within their own boundaries. Recognition means that the goods and services can be sold within the reciprocating jurisdiction without further testing, regulatory approvals or fees. The new regulations specify that in the event the free trade regulations conflict with other Ontario regulations, the free trade rules will prevail.

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

New Laws

Dec 11: Royal Assent for [Bill 72](#), the *Buy Ontario Act*, giving the provincial government authority to require public sector entities to give preference to Ontario or Canadian providers of goods and services when awarding government contracts. The new legislation applies to all public sector organizations, including municipalities, as well as contractors and subcontractors.

New Laws

Dec 19: The latest round of [Ontario Together Trade Fund \(OTTF\)](#) recipients include

[Aisin Canada Inc.](#) (\$2.2 million), [ArcelorMittal Tailored Blanks](#) (\$4.18 million), [Burnco Manufacturing Inc.](#) (\$2.5 million), [Cargowall Ltd.](#) (\$529,358), [Heali Medical Corp.](#) (\$1.7 million), [Letar Inc.](#) (\$800,925), [Mara Technologies](#) (\$2.2 million) and [Modern Elevator Innovations Inc.](#) (\$2.3 million).

New Laws

Nov 24: The Assembly defeated [Bill 61](#) which would have required the provincial government to implement an artificial intelligence, talent and innovation strategy. The *Ontario Artificial Intelligence, Talent, and Innovation Strategy Act, 2025* would have also established a new Advisory Committee to make recommendations on AI issues and publish an annual progress report.

Action Point: Find out how to guard against AI legal and liability risks by implementing a legally sound [workplace artificial intelligence use policy](#).

New Laws

Dec 12: Ontario officially launched its new Critical Minerals Processing Fund (CMPF), which will provide \$500 million to support strategic projects that accelerate the province's critical minerals processing capacity and strengthen domestic supply chains. Companies interested in CMPF funding should check the [Invest Ontario](#) website. Ontario's critical minerals supplies includes the vast reserves found in the Ring of Fire, an area almost 5,000 square kilometres located about 500 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay.

New Laws

Jan 1: [New regulations](#) establish the criteria that Ontario will use to designate Special Economic Zones, or geographic regions where critical minerals and other strategic projects essential to the province's economic future can be undertaken under minimal, streamlined, and expedited regulatory approval processes and rules.

New Laws

Jan 19: That's the deadline to comment on a new MOL [proposal](#) exploring different approaches to increase apprenticeship training and job opportunities on government-funded infrastructure projects. The policy objective is to use the government procurement process to ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers to support Ontario's ambitious infrastructure plan.

New Laws

Dec 3: Ontario government established a new working group to implement its [Advanced Wood Construction Action Plan](#) promoting the use of more wood-based building materials. The government initiated the Plan to support the forestry sector in response to the Trump tariffs.

Immigration

Dec 17: For the third straight year, the federal government cut Ontario's Provincial Attestation Letters (PALs) allocation of international students, this time by 42% to 104,780, with a cap of 70,074 international student permits. Ontario will continue to prioritize publicly assisted colleges and universities, who will get 96% of the allocations, while the remaining 4% go to language schools, private universities and

other institutions. Starting this year, master's and doctoral students applying to public colleges and universities will be exempt from the PAL requirement but will be included in overall cap allocation. Graduate students applying to private institutions will continue to be subject to PAL requirements.

Immigration

Nov 27: Ontario enacted new legislation ([Bill 30](#)) authorizing government immigration inspectors to require a person to attend an in-person interview separate and apart from other persons, subject to requirements to be set out in the regulations. The objective of separate interviews is to enable interviewees who might be intimidated by the presence of another interviewee to speak candidly.

Immigration

Jan 1: Comments closed on [proposed regulations](#) that would consolidate the 8 streams of the current Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program into 4 streams: i. an Employer Job Offer stream with high and low training, education, experience and responsibilities (TEER) tracks; ii. a stream targeting skilled healthcare professionals; iii. a stream for entrepreneurs who've already established a business in Ontario; and iv. a global excellence stream for individuals with exceptional talents and accomplishments.

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

Health & Safety

Nov 27: Newly passed and effective [Bill 30](#) (the *Working for Workers Seven Act*) authorizes MOL inspectors to issue Administrative Monetary Penalties against companies and individuals that commit OHS violations in amounts to be determined by regulations. Meanwhile, the MOL has published [regulations](#) implementing the new AMP rules.

Action Point: Find out how to survive OHS and other [surprise government inspections](#) that can lead to AMPs.

Health & Safety

Nov 27: The [Working for Workers Seven Act](#) legislation that just received Royal Assent and taken effect requires construction projects with 20 or more workers that are expected to last 3 months or longer to have automated external defibrillators for cardiac arrest at the site. It also creates a new WSIB program to reimburse constructors for the costs of purchasing an AED. The MOL published [regulations](#) to implement the rules.

Action Point: Find out about the [new Ontario AEDs regulations](#) and how to save lives by [implementing an AEDs Program](#) at your own workplace regardless of where in Canada it's located.

Workplace Violence

Nov 25: Newly tabled [Bill 77](#) expands OHS Act protections against reprisals to include reprisals against workers for speaking out about workplace violence and harassment. It also requires hospitals and long-term care homes to post monthly reports on its public website listing the number of incidents of workplace violence

and harassment that took place at the site in the previous month.

Action Point: Speaking out against workplace violence and harassment isn't blanket immunity to violate company rules and policies. Find out [how to discipline employees for legitimate offences without committing reprisals or retaliation](#).

Workplace Violence

Dec 9: [Private Member Bill 88](#), which has passed First Reading, requires holders of liquor licences and permits to implement mandatory sexual violence and harassment training programs for sales, security, supervisory and other key personnel. It would also amend the *OHS Act* to provide for required workplace violence and harassment certification training beyond current OHS training requirements.

Action Point: Domestic and sexual violence becomes an OHS issue and liability risk for employers when it happens at the victim's workplace. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

Workers' Compensation

Nov 27: Ontario enacted new legislation that makes failure to pay workers' compensation premiums an offence subject to administrative penalties. [Bill 30](#) also lists "aggravating factors" that increase administrative penalty amounts while creating a new maximum \$750,000 per conviction fine against persons convicted of 2 or more counts of the same *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* offence in the same legal proceeding.

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

CASES

Termination: Not Disclosing New Job Violates but Doesn't Repudiate Settlement Deal

A senior employee let go after over 26 years of service sued his former employer for wrongful dismissal. The sides settled out of court under an agreement requiring the company to pay 24 months' salary replacement. The employee also agreed to immediately notify the company if he obtained new employment, in which case he'd be entitled to a 50% lump sum payment of remaining salary still owed rather than full replacement. Roughly 5 months later, the employee started a new job but didn't notify the company. But the company found out about the new job and stopped making payments. The employee sued for his lump-sum and the company countersued, claiming that the employee repudiated the settlement and demanding repayment of benefits paid after starting the new job. The failure to provide the company notice, while a clear violation of the employee's obligations under the settlement agreement, wasn't egregious enough to constitute repudiation, especially since he eventually did tell the company about the new job 4 months later. Result: The company had to make the lump-sum payment minus the salary the employee had received from the new employer for 4 months [[Cross v. Cooling Tower Maintenance Inc.](#), 2025 ONSC 7203 (CanLII), December 23, 2025].

Action Point: Be sure to advise employees to consult their lawyers before they sign a written release. Use the [HRI template](#) to draft an enforceable severance release agreement.

Workplace Harassment: Masturbating in Back Seat of Uber Driver's Car Is Just Cause to Terminate

A roofing contractor paid for Uber to drive an employee returning to modified duties from a work injury to and from work each day. But the Return-To-Work took an unexpected turn when the company fired the employee for sexually harassing the Uber driver, accusing him of making inappropriate comments about the driver's appearance and masturbating in the back seat of her car. The union acknowledged the first charge, while insisting that the comments didn't amount to sexual harassment, and denied the second. After hearing from the employee and driver, the Ontario arbitrator found the driver's testimony more credible and in line with Uber's own internal records. Having concluded that the employee did masturbate, there was no need to analyze the employee's alleged comments in upholding termination for sexual harassment [[Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, Local 30 v Semple Gooder Roofing Corporation](#), 2025 CanLII 132377 (ON LA), December 18, 2025].

Action Point: Use the HR Insider [sexual harassment policy template](#) to review and improve your own policy.

Privacy: Recording Security Drills Invades Workers Privacy, Union Contends

The union filed a 2-pronged privacy grievance against Ontario Power Generation (OPG) for capturing non-security officers in the background while filming a security drill at a nuclear generating station and for using motion-activated teledose cameras to record workers without their knowledge. The Ontario arbitrator ordered OPG to notify site workers about the recordings and reasons for making them during security drills, refrain from using them for disciplinary purposes and consider the feasibility of blurring or obscuring the faces of workers shown on the recordings [[Ontario Power Generation v Power Workers' Union](#), 2025 CanLII 123063 (ON LA), November 13, 2025].

Action Point: This case illustrates the importance of [ensuring that digital solutions used to monitor employees remain within personal privacy boundaries](#). This is true even if the filming, taping, and monitoring is designed for safety rather than productivity or disciplinary purposes. The solution—which is required in Ontario: implement a [legally sound electronic monitoring policy](#).