

Ontario

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Statutory Holidays

Mar 13: Ontario plans to propose *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) changes that would allow retail business establishments to open on Family Day and Victoria Day, provided they pay employees who work the day time-and-a-half premium pay, in addition to full public holiday pay. Retail employees would still have their ESA rights to refuse work on a public holiday.

Action Point: Find out how to avoid costly payroll mistakes and employment standards violations by implementing a [Statutory Holiday Compliance Game Plan](#) at your company.

Leaves of Absence

Apr 1: Ontario passed but hasn't yet proclaimed ESA amendments giving employees with at least 13 weeks' service 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 six weeks before the expected placement date. Employers must retain leave records for three years after the day on which the leave expires.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Parental Leave Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Privacy

Mar 13: Ontario is modernizing its protocols for public sector disclosure of personal information and sensitive data and response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. The new framework will be better suited to ensure privacy and cyber security in a digital world than the analog system it's replacing.

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

Employment Benefits

Mar 5: Last year, Ontario passed legislation (Bill 68) permitting the transfer of assets from and conversion of a defined contribution (DC) single employer pension plan (SEPP) to a jointly sponsored pension plan (JSPP). Now the Ministry of Finance is launching public consultations seeking feedback on regulations implementing the new law. Issues on the table include notice requirements, conversion process timelines, completion report filings, and administrative monetary penalties for violations. Deadline [to comment](#): April 20.

Training

Mar 10: The federal government announced that it will invest \$228 million over the next three years to fund the Canada-Ontario Workforce Tariff Response, enabling up to 27,000 workers across the province in key sectors affected by US tariffs, including

softwood lumber, steel, and automotive manufacturing. As part of the initiative, Ontario will deliver targeted programs through its [Skills Advance Ontario \(SAO\)](#) program designed to help workers stay employed, retrain, upskill, and move into new in-demand jobs, while helping employers retain experienced staff. SAO will also support workforce development in high-growth sectors such as health care, skilled trades, energy, and natural resources.

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

Health & Safety

Feb 20: Ontario became the first province to launch an online registry of worker exposure to hazardous substances. The new Occupational Exposure Registry (OER) is a [secure digital portal](#) containing an easy-to-use self-tracker that enables workers to anonymously track their exposure to 11 different hazardous substances in the workplace, including asbestos, lead, mercury, and silica. The OER also provides information about how exposure occurred and what ventilation, PPE, and other protective measures were in place. Each submission generates a confirmation email and record that can be downloaded.

Health & Safety

Feb 19: Current Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations require that respirators be approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) or certified by a qualified individual as providing workers protection that's at least equivalent to a NIOSH-approved respirator. Comments just closed on a Ministry of Labour (MOL) [proposal](#) that would make compliance with CSA Z94.4.1, Performance of filtering respirators and the CSA Certification Program, another acceptable alternative to NIOSH approval.

Action Point: CSA Z94 is the standard for respirators compliance in most parts of the country. So, making CSA Z94 the standard in Ontario as well should make life easier, especially for companies that also operate outside Ontario. Go to the website of our sister service, OHS Compliance Insider, to get an effective [Respiratory Protection Equipment Compliance Game Plan](#) that you can implement at your site.

CASES

Employment Standards: Temporary Staffing Agency Fined \$100,000 for Obstructing an ESA Inspector

A government employment standards inspector demanded certain records to verify a temporary staffing agency's compliance with ESA requirements. The company provided only partial records. And upon reviewing the documents, the inspector discovered multiple inaccuracies and discrepancies. As a result, the company was fined \$100,000 after pleading guilty to producing false records and obstructing an ESA inspector [*ML Staffing Solutions Inc.*, [MOL Press Release](#), March 16, 2026].

Discrimination: Duty to Accommodate Doesn't Apply to Ex-Employees

Uber permanently removed a driver from its platform due to problems with his registration and licensing information. After fixing the problem and getting the right licence, the driver sent Uber an “Apology Letter” and asked to be reactivated. Uber said no. The driver then sued Uber for disability discrimination. The Ontario Human Rights Commission dismissed the claim. Even if the driver did have a disability entitling him to reasonable accommodation, Uber’s alleged violations all occurred after his account had already been deactivated for what the driver acknowledged were legitimate, nondiscriminatory reasons. It was only after the employment relationship ended when Uber’s accommodation obligations ended that he told the company about his disability [[Ahammad v. Uber Canada Inc.](#), 2026 HRT0 409 (CanLII), March 11, 2026].

Action Point: Find out how to implement [Accommodations Best Practices](#) to avoid breakdowns that can expose your company to liability for failure to reasonably accommodate an employee’s disability. The reason the driver in this case lost is that he didn’t notify Uber of his supposed disability until after he was kicked off the platform and the employment relationship had ended.

Health & Safety: Do Safety Committee Members Get Travel Costs to Inspect Their Own Office?

The union filed a grievance against Skilled Trades Ontario (STO) for not reimbursing the travel and parking expenses of worker joint health and safety committee (JHSC) members in carrying out their workplace inspection duties. Such expenses were actually non-reimbursable commuting costs since the JHSC members had to be present at the site anyway, the agency argued. But the union noted that OSC did, in fact, reimburse travel expenses for inspections when the office moved from Toronto to Mississauga and during the pandemic when worker JHSC members worked from home. The Ontario arbitrator handed down a split decision. The decision to exclude inspections from its travel reimbursement policy violated neither the workers’ JHSC member rights nor the collective agreement; however, in unilaterally imposing the new exclusion policy while renewal negotiations were taking place, the agency violated the *Labour Relations Act* rule banning employers from altering “the rates of wages or any other term or condition of employment” during the negotiating process [[Skilled Trades Ontario v OPSEU](#), 2026 CanLII 11914 (ON LA), February 18, 2025].