

[HR Compliance Priorities for June 2026: Key Legal Developments Employers Cannot Ignore](#)



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Canadian employers face an increasingly complex compliance landscape shaped by evolving employment standards, human rights obligations, workplace safety requirements, privacy regulations, and significant court decisions. Recent legislative developments and landmark rulings highlight several areas that HR leaders should prioritize to reduce legal exposure and strengthen workplace practices.

Youth Compliance Remains a Seasonal Priority

As organizations hire students and young workers during the summer months, compliance with employment standards and occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements becomes particularly important. Across Canada, legislation imposes restrictions on minimum hiring ages, permitted work activities, hours of work, and supervision requirements for young employees. **Takeaway:** Find out how to implement a [Game Plan](#) to comply with ESA and OHS laws governing young employees and be sure you know the [minimum age rules](#) and [work hours requirements](#) for young workers.

Supreme Court Expands Legal Remedies for Domestic Violence Victims

In *Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia* (May 2026), the Supreme Court of Canada recognized a new tort for intimate partner violence, allowing victims to seek monetary damages through civil lawsuits. While the case arose from a family law dispute, the ruling has workplace implications. Employers have legal obligations under occupational health and safety legislation to address domestic violence that may expose workers to risk in the workplace. The decision reinforces the importance of comprehensive workplace domestic violence policies, reporting procedures, and support mechanisms for affected employees. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence and [how to create an effective workplace domestic violence policy](#).

Pride Month Highlights Ongoing LGBTQ+ Compliance Obligations

Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression continue to receive robust

protection under Canadian human rights legislation. Recent cases demonstrate that employers who fail to respect these rights, including the intentional misuse of employee pronouns, may face significant damages awards. June serves as an appropriate reminder for organizations to review discrimination, harassment, accommodation, and workplace conduct policies to ensure they adequately protect LGBTQ+ employees and applicants. **Takeaway:** Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [sexual orientation and transgender discrimination policy](#) at your workplace and use the HR Insider [compliance checklist](#) to avoid gender identity and expression discrimination.

Burnout and Workplace Stress Create Growing Liability Risks

Economic pressures and workforce reductions have led many organizations to increase workloads without corresponding increases in resources. While overwork has traditionally been viewed as a productivity concern, recent legal developments suggest it is increasingly becoming a liability issue.

Employees are pursuing workers' compensation claims for psychological injuries, constructive dismissal actions, and human rights complaints based on workplace stress. A recent British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal decision permitted an employee's mental disability discrimination claim arising from alleged workplace burnout to proceed, signalling increased legal scrutiny of excessive workloads and employer mental health practices. Organizations should evaluate workload management strategies and strengthen workplace mental health policies to mitigate risk.

Takeaway: All of this makes it imperative for HR directors to ensure that their organizations [take steps to prevent mental stress in workplace](#), including implementing an effective workplace [Mental Health Policy](#) and [Work-Related Stress Policy](#).

AI, Privacy, and Digital Harassment Laws Continue to Evolve

Governments across Canada are rapidly introducing legislation addressing artificial intelligence, digital privacy, cyberbullying, and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. These developments reflect growing concern about emerging technologies and their impact on workplace rights.

Employers should establish clear policies governing AI use, employee privacy, social media conduct, and digital communications. Failure to address these issues may expose organizations to privacy complaints, human rights claims, reputational damage, and litigation. Find out how to guard against AI legal risks by implementing a legally sound [workplace artificial intelligence use policy](#) and what to do to protect your organization from [revenge porn and cyberbullying liability](#).

Global Instability Reinforces Business Travel Responsibilities

Ongoing geopolitical conflicts and public health concerns, including Ebola-related travel restrictions affecting several African countries, continue to create risks for employees travelling internationally. Employers have a duty to assess foreseeable hazards and implement safeguards when assigning employees to higher-risk destinations. **Takeaway:** Companies that send employees to do business in these countries and regions must create and implement a [policy for business travel to dangerous locations](#).

Significant Court Decisions Shaping Employer Obligations

In *Poulin v. Hydro-Québec* (2026 QCCA 758), Québec's Court of Appeal awarded a long-serving executive 24 months' notice worth \$836,365 after finding he had been

constructively dismissed. The court ruled he was not required to accept a demotion, despite identical compensation, because the employer failed to properly structure the offer as working notice of termination. Find out about the [7 things](#) wrongfully dismissed employees must do to mitigate their damages.

The Alberta Court of Appeal in *EPCOR Utilities Inc. v. IBEW* (2026 ABCA 191) affirmed that employers must accommodate employees facing childcare conflicts. The court upheld findings that working parents whose schedules prevented them from caring for young children had established valid family status discrimination claims. Find out how far employers must go to [accommodate the scheduling needs of working parents](#).

In *Antony v. Yukon University* (2026), a university was ordered to pay more than \$54,000 after terminating an employee shortly after she returned from domestic violence leave. The adjudicator concluded that her status as a domestic violence victim factored into the decision, constituting unlawful discrimination based on sex and family status. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

The Alberta case *O'Donoghue v. Fluid Energy Group Ltd.* (2026 ABKB 428) demonstrates how informal communications can trigger liability. Text messages directing a senior executive to surrender company property and advising that a termination package was being prepared were found to constitute dismissal, supporting a constructive dismissal claim. Find out about the [13 most common constructive dismissal liability pitfalls](#) and what to do to manage each one.

In *Crocker v. Gore Mutual Insurance Company* (2026 BCHRT 118), the BC Human Rights Tribunal allowed a discrimination claim arising from alleged workplace overload and stress to proceed against the employer, reinforcing concerns about burnout-related liability. The scary part of *Crocker* is the implication that overworking or burning out employees may carry the risk of liability for mental disability discrimination. That's one more reason it's important to implement an effective workplace [mental health policy](#) for your employees.

Québec employers received support for reasonable workplace testing policies in *Teamsters Québec, local 1999 v. Agropur Coopérative* (2026), where termination was upheld after a safety-sensitive employee refused a drug test supported by reasonable grounds for suspicion. Find out [how to create a legally sound drug testing policy](#) at your workplace.

Other notable decisions addressed compensation for cancelled training sessions, the enforceability of severance releases, workplace surveillance, and employee reporting of safety violations. Use the [HRI template](#) to draft an enforceable severance release agreement.

Ontario arbitrators confirmed that surveillance footage originally reviewed for safety purposes could be used to support discipline for time theft. Meanwhile, a British Columbia arbitrator ruled that photographing a serious safety violation did not constitute harassment and that workers should not be penalized for reporting safety concerns in good faith. The *Autoliv* case illustrates the importance of [ensuring that digital solutions used to monitor employees remain within personal privacy boundaries](#) and why you should implement a [legally sound electronic monitoring policy](#).

Looking Ahead

The common thread across these developments is clear: employers are expected to take a proactive approach to workplace safety, mental health, accommodation, privacy,

discrimination prevention, and emerging technology risks. Organizations that regularly review policies, train managers, and respond promptly to evolving legal standards will be best positioned to reduce liability and maintain compliance in an increasingly complex regulatory environment.