

HR Insider New Laws and Trends – July 2026



HR Updates: Laws, Trends & Insights

Stay informed on regulatory changes, compliance requirements, and evolving workplace safety practices.

Here are the key new employment laws and trends shaping compliance that HR directors need to know and brief their CEOs about.

Sorry, your browser doesn't support embedded videos.

Ontario Settles Training School Abuse Victims Class Action for \$60 Million

An Ontario court approved the \$60 million settlement of the class action lawsuit against the province filed by thousands of individuals for the physical, sexual, and psychological abuse they suffered while placed in provincially operated juvenile detention and reform facilities, aka “Training Schools”, between 1953 and 1984. The Ontario government issued a public acknowledgment and expression of regret. Eligible class members will receive compensation ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000, depending on the severity of the harm they suffered [[Brown v. His Majesty the King in Right of the Province of Ontario](#), 2026 ONSC 2880, May 21, 2026]. **Action point:** You can’t assume workers will tell you if they’re being harassed, bullied, or threatened at work. Many are too afraid to come forward, especially if they don’t think the company will take their complaint seriously. That’s why you should [use pulse surveys to smoke out signs of a toxic workplace](#).

Nunavut Becomes the First to Break the \$20 Minimum Wage Barrier

It was only a few years ago when the \$15.00 per hour minimum wage became a political football and rallying cry for employment standards reform. Today, Alberta’s \$15.00 is the lowest minimum wage rate in Canada. And on September 1, Nunavut will become the first jurisdiction in Canada to cross the \$20 threshold when the general minimum wage rate increases 42 cents to \$20.17 per hour. That’s more than \$1.50 above the second and third highest rates in, respectively, Yukon (\$18.51) and British Columbia

(\$18.25). **Action point:** Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

Labour Shortages Make Upskilling & Retraining the Order of the Day

Costs are rising and labour is in short supply. Even if you could find employees with the skills your company so desperately needs, you may lack the resources necessary to hire and retain them. The answer may be to look within. By implementing a strategy known as “upskilling,” you may be able to train the employees already on your payroll to acquire the skills they need to step into the higher positions you need to fill. Upskilling is a win-win, provided that it’s done right. **Action point:** Find out how to [Avoid the Legal Pitfalls of Upskilling](#) and implement an effective [Upskilling Plan](#) at your company.

Governments Continue to Lay the Foundation for Regulation of Artificial Intelligence

Headline news: AI is big. And that includes AI in the workplace for HR functions such as recruitment and hiring. As far as regulation goes, it’s a Wild Wild West. But now lawmakers are starting to catch up. In the past six months, Privacy Commissioners, special task forces, and other government agencies from across the country have begun outlining basic standards governing fair and responsible use of AI for public functions, including employment. Meanwhile, legal glitches in your current AI solutions may be exposing your organization to liability risks. **Action point:** Find out how to implement a [Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent AI privacy, discrimination, and other liability risks.

OHS Agencies Call on Employers to Protect Workers against Heat Stress Hazards

Canada is enduring a sweltering summer, with long-lasting heat domes sending temperatures soaring into the 30s and mid-40s. This lethal combination of heat and humidity makes it imperative to safeguard outdoor workers against heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses. Heat stress is also a year-round concern for indoor workers who carry out operations inside heated and poorly ventilated spaces like industrial ovens. Meanwhile, we’re tracking new regulations in the federal jurisdiction and legislation in Ontario requiring employers to implement a comprehensive program to manage heat, cold, and thermal stress hazards. **Action point:** Prevent heat stress and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) penalties by implementing a legally sound [Heat Stress Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

“Everybody Else Does It” is a Valid Defence Against Time Theft (& Other Violations)

There’s a new case out of Ontario that all HR directors should know about. It began

When a night shift supervisor with 17 years of service got fired after admitting to occasionally “topping up” employees’ hours, including giving full hours to workers who left before their shift ended when all work had been completed. His defence: This was the same “clock out/top up” practice used by all night shift supervisors for at least 19 years, which started before I got here and is continuing even now. The Ontario court concluded that the supervisor was wrongfully dismissed. “The evidence establishes that ‘topping up’ employees’ hours was an ingrained institutional practice that existed at [the company] for a lengthy period and was applied consistently and uniformly by all Night Shift Supervisors.” The price tag: 19 months of pay in lieu of notice plus 14 months in *Wallace* damages for bad faith in carrying out the termination [[Wilsher v. Olympic Wholesale](#), 2026 ONSC 3620 (CanLII), June 26, 2026]. **Action point:** Find out about the [6 steps](#) to take to prevent employees from committing time theft. But also remember what happened in *Wilsher*. The moral: Employers are on shaky ground when seeking to discipline employees for violating policies that have been inconsistently or not enforced in the past. This is true not just of time theft but any HR policy.