

HR Insider Newsletter – August 2026



The August 2026 edition of the HR Insider Newsletter focuses on the practical workplace issues that become especially important during the summer months, including substance use and cannabis policies, vacation carry-over, payroll remittance errors, vacation scheduling, recent employment law updates, case alerts, and employee recognition.

One of the central articles in this issue looks at substance use and cannabis policies in summer workplaces. While cannabis has been legal for recreational use in Canada since 2018, employers still have a duty to maintain safe workplaces. Summer can increase impairment-related risk because many employers rely on seasonal workers, extended shifts, outdoor work, heavy equipment, transportation, and physically demanding work in hot conditions. The article reminds HR leaders to focus on observable workplace behaviours, not assumptions, and to respond with professionalism, respect, and empathy.

The issue also includes an Ask the Expert feature on vacation carry-over policies in Ontario. The key point is that statutory vacation time cannot simply be paid out if it hasn't been taken. Ontario's Employment Standards Act requires employees to take their minimum vacation entitlement within the required period, subject to limited exceptions. Employers have more flexibility with vacation above the statutory minimum, but carry-over and forfeiture rules must be clearly written, consistently applied, and fair.

Another practical article looks at CRA payroll remittance penalties. Through a real case example, the newsletter explains that employers may be able to obtain relief from penalties where they can show they exercised reasonable care and weren't negligent or careless. The broader message for payroll and HR teams is that remittance processes need clear controls, backup procedures, documentation, and prompt escalation when something goes wrong.

The vacation scheduling article provides nine best practices for avoiding conflict and coverage gaps. It encourages employers to use clear written vacation policies, plan earlier, comply with employment standards requirements, establish fair rules for competing requests, build staffing flexibility, train managers, require coverage plans, use scheduling technology, and avoid creating a culture where employees feel discouraged from taking vacation. 

The Month-in-Review section highlights important developments across Canada, including federal Ebola screening requirements for certain travelers, Alberta childcare incident posting rules, British Columbia's minimum wage increase, Manitoba restrictions on mandatory overtime for nurses, New Brunswick's long-term illness and injury leave, Newfoundland and Labrador workers' compensation coverage for

psychological injury due to workplace harassment, Ontario public-sector cyber security requirements, Prince Edward Island sick leave changes, Québec workplace sexual violence prevention rules, and Yukon administrative monetary penalties. The case alerts section reinforces the need for careful process and documentation. This month's cases include enforceable severance releases, constructive dismissal risk from termination-related texts, family status accommodation for working parents, overtime claims for cancelled training, and the Supreme Court of Canada's recognition of a new tort for intimate partner violence. Together, these cases remind employers that casual communications, inconsistent scheduling decisions, and weak accommodation processes can create significant liability.



The issue closes with a useful piece on employee recognition and retention. Recognition doesn't have to be expensive to be effective. The strongest programs are timely, sincere, inclusive, specific, and connected to the real work employees are doing. Whether it's recognizing vacation coverage, safety performance, mentorship, seasonal workloads, or behind-the-scenes support, appreciation works best when it feels genuine and fair.

Overall, the August 2026 HR Insider Newsletter is a timely issue for HR leaders, payroll teams, managers, and executives. It connects summer workplace realities with core compliance risks involving impairment, vacation, payroll, scheduling, accommodations, workplace violence, and retention. For employers looking to reduce confusion, support managers, and strengthen defensible HR practices, this month's edition is well worth reading.

Key takeaways from this issue

1. Budget-season stress should be managed as a workplace risk, not dismissed as normal pressure.
2. Employee privacy concerns on job sites may trigger safety obligations even where privacy law does not provide a simple answer.
3. Termination pay for irregular workweeks requires careful averaging and jurisdiction-specific compliance.
4. Removing "Canadian experience" from job ads is only the first step. Employers need structured, defensible hiring systems.
5. AI-based monitoring and employee surveillance can create serious privacy risk when the technology goes beyond what is necessary and proportionate.
6. Remote work has not eliminated housing-related retention pressure. It has changed where that pressure shows up.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS MONTH

<https://hrinsider.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Lilian-10870531.mp3>

IMPORTANT DATES

• [HR COMPLIANCE CALENDAR](#)

- August 3—Ontario/Northwest Territories/Nunavut—Civic Holiday
- August 3—Alberta—Heritage Day statutory holiday
- August 3—British Columbia—BC Day statutory holiday
- August 3—New Brunswick—New Brunswick Day statutory holiday
- August 3—Saskatchewan—Saskatchewan Day statutory holiday
- August 10—Québec—[Amendments](#) to *OHS Safety Code for Construction Work* governing personal fall protection during metal bridging work take effect
- August 10—Québec—[Amendments](#) to *OHS Regulation respecting concrete pumps and distribution masts* take effect

- August 17–Yukon–Discovery Day statutory holiday
- August 29–Nationwide–Ebola travel restrictions scheduled to expire

THIS MONTH'S CONTENT IN FULL

- [Addressing Substance Use and Cannabis Policies in Summer Workplaces](#)
- [Vacation Carry-Over Policies in Ontario – Ask the Expert](#)
- [Employee Vacation Scheduling: 9 Best Practices to Avoid Conflict & Coverage Gaps](#)
- [Month In Review](#)
- [Do Payroll Remittance Errors Justify Waiver of CRA Tax Penalties?](#)
- [Retention Through Recognition: Summer Morale Boosters](#)

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND READING

- Implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.
- Find out about the [rules governing whether employees are entitled to be paid for training time](#).
- Find out how far employers must go to [accommodate the scheduling needs of working parents](#).
- Find out about the [13 most common constructive dismissal liability pitfalls](#) and what to do to manage each one.
- Implement an effective workplace [mental health policy](#) for your employees.
- Use the [HRI template](#) to draft an enforceable severance release agreement.