

HR Insider Newsletter – November 2026



This month's HR Insider looks at several issues that sit right at the centre of day-to-day HR decision-making.

We begin with accommodation and return-to-work programs.

Employers have a legal duty to make reasonable efforts to accommodate employees returning from injury or illness, including modified duties and schedules where appropriate. But that obligation has limits. The key is being able to demonstrate that the employer made genuine, good-faith efforts before concluding that further accommodation would create undue hardship. 

The practical lesson is that return-to-work decisions should be documented carefully. Employers should seek updated medical information, adjust plans as an employee's capabilities change, and explore available work before deciding that the accommodation process has reached its limit.

We also look at intergenerational conflict in the workplace.

Many so-called generational problems are really disagreements about communication, flexibility, technology, feedback, or working styles. HR should be cautious about labels like Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, or Gen Z becoming stereotypes. The better approach is to establish clear behavioural expectations and deal with actual performance or conduct issues rather than making assumptions based on age.

The newsletter also examines recruitment ethics and inclusive hiring practices.

Bias can enter the hiring process through job advertisements, screening criteria, interviews, assessments, accessibility barriers, and vague ideas such as "culture fit." HR can reduce these risks by using job-related selection criteria, structured interviews, standardized questions, documented decisions, and accessible recruitment practices.

A particularly useful reminder is to review job requirements before posting a vacancy. Requirements that have simply been carried forward from an old job description may unnecessarily exclude qualified candidates. Employers should ask whether each qualification is genuinely necessary to perform the work.

This month's case alerts also offer several important lessons.

A company that treated its CFO as an independent contractor was found to have misclassified her, reinforcing that worker status depends on the actual relationship, not simply what the contract calls someone.

Another employer failed to prove harassment allegations against a nurse, highlighting the importance of proper investigations, written policies, and objective evidence before serious discipline is imposed.

And in another case, an employer's history of lax enforcement weakened its attempt to impose a five-day suspension after a safety incident. The message for HR is simple: inconsistent enforcement can undermine future discipline.

Finally, Ask the Expert looks at employee record retention in Ontario.

There isn't one universal seven-year rule for every HR record. Different records have different retention requirements, and an employee's death generally doesn't shorten those periods. Employers should use a record-retention schedule based on the type of document rather than applying one blanket rule to every personnel file.

The overall message this month is consistency.

Whether you're accommodating an injured employee, managing conflict, hiring, investigating misconduct, enforcing safety rules, or maintaining HR records, the strongest position is built on clear expectations, documented decisions, and consistent application.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS MONTH

<https://hrinsider.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Colman-11496172.mp3>

IMPORTANT DATES

November

November 1–Alberta–New administrative monetary penalty late fees [regulations](#) take effect.

November 1–Yukon–New [workers' compensation cancer presumption](#) for wildland firefighters takes effect.

November 11–Federal/Alberta/British Columbia/New Brunswick/Newfoundland & Labrador/Northwest Territories/Nunavut/Prince Edward Island/Saskatchewan/Yukon–Remembrance Day statutory holiday.

November 19–Alberta–Deadline to [apply](#) for Northern and Regional Economic Development grants.

November 21–Nunavut–Deadline to complete online [Alcohol Questionnaire](#).

[SEE MORE...](#)

THIS MONTH'S CONTENT IN FULL

- [How Far Must Return to Work Programs Go to "Accommodate" Injured Employees?](#)
- [Record Retention After Employee Death – Ask the Expert](#)
- [Managing Intergenerational Conflict in Teams](#)
- [Month In Review](#)
- [Recruitment Ethics: Building Fair and Inclusive Hiring Practices](#)

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND READING

How to implement a legally sound [Non-Discrimination Policy](#) at your workplace.

How to apply [the 4 factors that CRA and the courts use to determine whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor](#).

How to implement a [Harassment Prevention and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

How to implement a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace.

Find out [how to avoid inadvertent reprisals or retaliation](#).