

# Month in Review – Nova Scotia



## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Apr 1: That's when Nova Scotia's general minimum wage will increase from \$16.50 to \$16.75 per hour. Another 25 cents increase will take the minimum wage to \$17 per hour on October 1. The scheduled increases come a year after the province raised its minimum wage by \$1.30 per hour in 2025.

**Action Point:** Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when implementing minimum wage increases.

### Minimum Wage

Apr 1: The minimum wage for Logging and Forest Operations time workers will increase from \$16.50 to \$16.75 per hour and for other workers from \$3,243.90 to \$3,293.05 per month. On October 1, the rates will increase again to \$17.00 per hour and \$3,342.20 per month, respectively.

### Payroll

Jan 1: The Nova Scotia Basic Personal Amount exemption increased from \$11,744 to \$11,932. Until recently, the province reduced the BPANS for taxpayers earning above \$25,000. The higher annual earnings were above the \$25,000 threshold, the greater the BPANS reduction until taxable income reached \$75,000 at which point the BPANS would be totally eliminated. But last July, Nova Scotia got rid of the clawback mechanism and set the BPANS at a fixed maximum that applies to all taxpayers regardless of income.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [8 important new payroll changes](#) that will affect your current year T4 filings and 2026 source deductions.

### Hiring & Recruiting

Jan 19: Nova Scotia published an [updated version](#) of its list of foreign worker recruiters who are licensed to practice in the province. Foreign worker recruiters need a valid Foreign Worker Recruiter Licence from the Labour Standards Division

unless an [exemption](#) applies.

**Action Point:** Find out about the 10 things employers [need to know about hiring temporary foreign workers](#).

## Discrimination

Jan 8: Nova Scotia published its first ever [2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan](#) to advance equity, improve access to services and supports, and build safer, more inclusive communities across the province.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [sexual orientation and transgender discrimination policy](#) at your workplace.

## Health & Safety

Jan 9: In 2025, Nova Scotia's injury rate fell from 1.38 to 1.22 per 100 workers, its lowest on record, according to the WCB. The number of time-loss days paid in 2025 also dropped from 269 to 226, another record low.

## Workers' Compensation

Jan 20: Reminder: Nova Scotia employers have until March 31 to submit their workers' compensation payroll reports to the WCB listing their actual numbers from 2025 and projected numbers for 2026 to avoid potential late fees, interest, and penalties.

**Action Point:** Look up the [2026 workers' compensation premium rates](#) in each part of Canada.

## CASES

### **Labour Relations: OK to Remove Firefighter Classification from CUPE Local to Its Own Unit**

Labour boards are typically reluctant to break existing bargaining units into separate fragments but the Nova Scotia Board found compelling reasons to remove the firefighter/operator classification from Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 281, citing the parties' joint agreement that the classification "operates in a unique work environment with unique working conditions" that "have evolved in such a way that there is no longer a community of interest between the fire fighter/operators and the rest of the bargaining unit" [[New Glasgow Professional Operators/ Firefighters Association v New Glasgow \(Town\)](#), 2025 NSLB 347 (CanLII), January 6, 2026].

### **Termination: Handwashing Violations Don't Justify Firing Veteran Dish Washer**

The union claimed that it was too harsh for an elderly residential care facility to fire a 63-year-old dish washer with 40 years of service for food theft and 2 instances of violating food handling hygiene rules. The Nova Scotia arbitrator agreed. Although failing to wash hands after washing dirty dishes and handling clean ones was a serious and potentially dangerous health transgression given the residents' vulnerability, it wasn't just cause for termination given the dish washer's long and excellent service record, economic vulnerability, and evidence suggesting that the handwashing rules were unclear and inconsistently enforced. As

for food theft, there was evidence that it was common practice for workers to snack on food intended for residents. Result: The

arbitrator reduced the penalty to a 4-week unpaid suspension with no loss of seniority [[Unifor Local 4606 v Northwood Inc](#), 2025 CanLII 132802 (NS LA), December 19, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace that you can use to enforce safety and other HR rules and policies.

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