Monthly Compliance Briefing for HR Directors of Ontario Companies



The Ontario Assembly was back in session with some important employment legislation on the table. But there are other, more pressing compliance matters that Ontario HR directors need to deal with, including new job advertising and recruiting requirements that take effect on January 1. Here's a quick briefing of all the important regulatory developments that you need to be on top of.

Regulatory Compliance Deadlines

New ESA regulations taking effect on Jan. 1, 2026, require employers with 25 or more employees to include certain salary and other information in public job postings. Employers will also have to get back to interviewees within 45 days. These new requirements don't apply to jobs paying $200,000 or more.

Bill 30

The most important piece of Ontario employment legislation in the pipeline right now is Bill 30, the *Working for Workers Seven Act*, which has passed Second Reading and will likely pass before the year ends. Like its 6 predecessors, Working for Workers Seven includes a bundle of different employment reform measures affecting employment standards, OHS and workers' compensation laws. Highlights include:

- Extension of temporary layoffs to up to 35 weeks in a 52-consecutive week period.
- New 3-day unpaid job search leave for employees included in group terminations of 50 or more.
- New fraud protection requirements for job posting platforms.
- New first aid requirements for large construction sites lasting over 3 months.
- New administrative monetary penalties for OHS and workers' compensation violations.

Other New Ontario Employment Legislation

Ontario is also getting ready to pass Bill 69 requiring, among other things, that personal support workers get at least $8.00 more than minimum wage for each hour worked in addition to health benefits, pension benefits, and minimum paid sick leave.

The new budget bill (Bill 68) sets new *Pensions Benefits Act* rules on employers seeking to convert a single employer pension plan into a jointly sponsored pension plan. The Bill also gives members of the single employer plan the right to elect not to transfer their own benefits to the new plan.

Free Trade & Labour Mobility

All 14 of Canada's governments, including Ontario, signed a new Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement (CMRA) that comes into force in December, harmonizing compliance requirements for thousands of goods across the country—excluding food—and reducing barriers to interprovincial business.

Like most provinces, Ontario has enacted new free trade legislation allowing for the free movement of intra-provincial goods and services and recognition of out-of-province professional certifications and accreditations of workers from jurisdictions with reciprocal legislation, making it easier for them to ply their trade in Ontario.

The U.S. tariffs have also generated another important regulatory development with employment ramifications, namely, the rise of government Buy Canadian procurement policies. Newly introduced Bill 72, the *Buy Ontario Act*, gives the provincial government authority to require public sector entities to give preference to Ontario or Canadian providers of goods and services when awarding government contracts. The new legislation applies to all public sector organizations, including municipalities, as well as contractors and subcontractors. Meanwhile, Ontario awarded its first round of tariff support funding under the Ontario Together Trade Fund, with further rounds to follow.

Important Employment Law Cases

Among the notable HR cases reported in Ontario in November was *Queen's University v Queen's University Faculty Association*, in which an arbitrator sided with a union's attempts to block a university from unilaterally adopting a new policy requiring faculty to install third-party "Endpoint" software on personal cell phones, computers and tablets used for work. The arbitrator ordered the university to repay employees for the costs of installing the software and will next decide whether the policy is an unreasonable abuse of management authority and violation of faculty members' privacy [2025 CanLII 114185, November 7, 2026].

In *Lam v. Data Scientific Inc.*, the Ontario Human Rights Commission awarded a probationary graphic $30,000 in damages as compensation for being subjected to pregnancy discrimination and harassment. Upon learning that she was pregnant and planning to take maternity leave, the company excluded her from training sessions, took away her computer and decided against offering her permanent employment. Adding insult to injury were the comments made by her bosses including suggesting that she was "just there to get pregnant and would never come back."

Action Points for Ontario HR Directors

- Implement or review your current Pay Transparency Compliance Game Plan to ensure it complies with the new ESA job posting requirements.
- Be prepared to modify your employment leave policies to comply with the new unpaid job search leave for group termination rules in case Bill 30 passes.
- Be prepared to modify your temporary layoff policies in accordance with the

Bill 30 temporary layoff requirements.

- Ensure that digital technology solutions you use to monitor employees remain within personal privacy boundaries.
- Implement a legally sound policy for treating pregnant employees.