Ontario’s Working For Workers Six Act, 2024 Receives Royal Assent



On December 19, 2024, Ontario’s *Working for Workers Six Act, 2024* (Bill 229) received Royal Assent. Bill 229 amends several statutes including the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.*

Key amendments of particular interest to employers are addressed below.

Employment Standards Act, 2000 (*ESA*)

The following amendment comes into force **June 19, 2025**:

- An employee with at least 13 weeks of service is entitled to an unpaid leave of up to 27 weeks if the employee is unable to perform the duties of their position because of a serious medical condition

The following amendment comes into force **on a date to be proclaimed in the future**:

- An employee with at least 13 weeks of service is entitled to an unpaid leave of up to 16 weeks after the placement or arrival of a child into the employee’s custody, care and control through adoption or surrogacy

Occupational Health and Safety Act (*OHSA*)

The following amendments **are now in force**:

- A minimum fine of $500,000 will be imposed on any corporation found guilty of a second or subsequent offence under the *OHSA* that results in the death or serious injury of one or more workers in a two-year period
- An employer is required to ensure that any personal protective clothing and equipment is a proper fit and appropriate in the circumstances; the government also has the authority to impose additional regulatory requirements related to the assessment of personal protective clothing and equipment
- The Chief Prevention Officer has the authority to:
    - establish criteria to assess and approve training programs delivered outside of Ontario for equivalency
    - establish policies related to general training requirements under the *OHSA*
    - seek advice from an advisory committee established by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

    - collect and use personal information for the purpose of developing, monitoring or reporting on a provincial health and safety strategy or for the purpose of providing advice on the prevention of workplace injury and occupational disease

The following amendment comes into force **on January 1, 2025**:

- The Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (Minister) has the power to require a constructor to establish a worker trades committee at a project and provide for the composition, practice and procedure of that worker trades committee

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

The following amendments come into force **on a date to be proclaimed in the future**:

- Presumptive coverage for primary-site kidney cancer and primary-site colorectal cancer is extended to prescribed firefighters and fire investigators, provided the worker had at least 10 years of service before being diagnosed
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board shall distribute surplus amounts in the insurance fund to a Schedule 2 employer that is a municipality, provided certain prescribed requirements are met

Additional Statutory Amendments

Bill 229 makes additional amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*, and the *Ontario Immigration Act, 2015* that are discussed in our *FTR Now* of November 28, 2024.

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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