

Preparing for Fall Recruiting Season



Fall is one of the busiest recruiting periods of the year. Organizations may be replacing employees who moved on during the summer, hiring ahead of year-end production demands, preparing for seasonal operations, or recruiting students and recent graduates entering the labour market. For HR directors and occupational health and safety (OHS) managers, successful fall recruitment requires more than filling vacancies quickly. Employers also need to consider compliance, workplace safety, accessibility, onboarding capacity, and whether hiring practices are appropriate for the environments in which employees will work.

Start With Workforce Planning

Effective fall recruiting begins by identifying what the organization needs. HR teams should review turnover, anticipated retirements, seasonal workloads, upcoming projects, leave coverage, and positions that have been difficult to fill.

Different sectors will face different pressures. Retailers, distribution centres, hospitality businesses, and transportation companies may need temporary employees ahead of the holiday season. Construction, utilities, manufacturing, and resource industries may need skilled workers capable of entering higher-risk environments. Offices and professional services organizations may focus on permanent roles, while technology and knowledge-based employers may recruit remote or hybrid employees across several jurisdictions.

Hiring managers should clearly distinguish essential job requirements from preferences. Job descriptions should accurately describe responsibilities, scheduling expectations, physical demands, travel requirements, workplace location, required certifications, and other legitimate qualifications.

Keep Recruitment Practices Compliant

Recruitment creates legal obligations before an employee even begins work. Human rights and anti-discrimination laws throughout Canada and the United States generally restrict employers from making employment decisions based on protected characteristics.

Interview questions should therefore focus on an applicant's ability to perform legitimate job requirements rather than personal characteristics. Employers should also ensure that automated screening tools, artificial intelligence, personality

assessments, background checks, and other selection methods do not unintentionally create discriminatory barriers.

Pay transparency requirements are another growing consideration. Depending on the jurisdiction, employers may be required to disclose salary or wage ranges in job advertisements. Multi-jurisdictional employers should determine which rules apply when advertising remote positions that could be performed from several locations.

Accessibility should also be built into recruitment. Applicants should have an appropriate way to request accommodation during interviews, testing, or other stages of the hiring process.

Recruit for the Workplace Employees Will Enter

Recruiting strategies should reflect actual working conditions.

In **construction, manufacturing, warehousing, utilities, and resource industries**, employers should verify required qualifications, licences, certifications, and safety competencies. Recruitment timelines should leave enough time for orientation, equipment training, site-specific instruction, and any required fit testing or competency assessments before employees begin hazardous work.

In **healthcare, education, social services, and other public-facing workplaces**, employers may need stronger screening processes because employees work with patients, students, clients, or vulnerable populations. Background checks, credential verification, immunization requirements, or professional registration requirements may apply depending on the role and jurisdiction.

In **retail, hospitality, and seasonal operations**, speed can become the biggest challenge. Large numbers of employees may need to be hired and trained within weeks. Employers should resist shortening orientation simply because workers are temporary. Seasonal employees generally require the same fundamental workplace safety information and protections as permanent workers.

For **remote and hybrid workplaces**, HR teams should establish location expectations before hiring. An employee's physical work location can affect employment standards, payroll, workers' compensation, taxation, privacy, and OHS obligations. Employers recruiting remotely should therefore confirm where employees are permitted to work rather than assuming that "remote" means anywhere.

Build Safety Into Onboarding

Hiring is only the first step. Fall recruitment plans should account for whether supervisors and trainers actually have capacity to onboard new employees safely.

New and young workers can face increased risk when they are unfamiliar with workplace hazards, equipment, procedures, or expectations. Orientation should cover emergency procedures, hazard reporting, workplace violence and harassment policies, required personal protective equipment, incident reporting, and employees' rights and responsibilities.

Job-specific training should follow. Employers should document training and verify competency where appropriate rather than relying solely on attendance records. Autumn also introduces seasonal hazards. Employees working outdoors, driving, travelling between sites, or working in warehouses may soon encounter reduced daylight, colder temperatures, wet surfaces, and eventually winter conditions. Incorporating seasonal safety expectations into onboarding can prepare employees before conditions

deteriorate.

Make Fall Recruitment Sustainable

Recruiting successfully should not be measured only by how quickly vacancies disappear. Poorly defined roles, rushed hiring decisions, inadequate orientation, and unrealistic expectations can contribute to early turnover, injuries, performance problems, and repeated recruitment costs.

HR and OHS leaders can improve outcomes by coordinating recruitment, selection, accommodation, training, and safety planning before fall hiring accelerates. The goal should be to bring employees into roles they understand, workplaces they are prepared to enter, and organizations equipped to support them from their first day.