The 7 Biggest New Hr Laws Of The Year (So Far)



As we roll past the midpoint of 2021, I decided to take a step back and reflect on the year's biggest stories in HR compliance. Having listed the most impactful court cases last week, here are the most significant new employment laws to go on the books from January to July, 2021. Check out the HRI site for more detail on each of the new laws.

1. Federal C-65 Workplace Harassment and Violence Rules

Sweeping changes to federal workplace harassment and violence laws under Bill C-65 took effect on January 1, 2021; similar rules patterned on the C-65 model will also take effect in Yukon on September 4.

2. New Federal Holiday and Minimum Wage
In addition to the new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation general holiday that will be observed for the first time on September 30, the government established a first-ever federal minimum wage of $15 that takes effect on January 1. All of this on top of the extensive new
protections for unpaid interns.

3. Paid COVID-19 Vaccination and Sick Leaves

Several provinces have adopted paid leave giving employees 6 hours to get vaccinated during work hours; BC, Ontario and Sask. took it to the next level by providing paid days off for time missed due to public health emergencies.

4. Bill 47 Workers Comp Changes in Alberta

One of the most controversial new HR laws to take effect in 2021 was Alberta's Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act (aka, Bill 47) making a series of pro-employer changes to workers comp and OHS laws, including the duty to reemploy injured workers with over 12 months' service.

5. New Accessibility Legislation in BC

In June, BC became the latest province to adopt sweeping legislation dedicated to making all aspects of public life, including employment and the workplace, accessible to persons with disabilities.

6. Ontario Overhauls Skilled Trades Training Rules

On June 3, Ontario passed Bill 288, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021) to establish a new regulatory system for apprenticeship training.

7. Manitoba Doubles Workplace Health and Safety Penalties

On May 20, the Manitoba Assembly passed Bill 11, which doubles the maximum fines for Workplace Safety and Health Act violations.