

# Federal

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Infectious Illness

May 30: Effective through August 29, Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and foreign travelers seeking to enter Canada who've been in the Congo, Uganda, or South Sudan within the previous 21 days must undergo assessment for Ebola upon arrival. While in the country, they must have access to a location where they can safely stay for 21 days.

**Action Point:** Find out [whether fear of Ebola infection is grounds for an OHS work refusal](#).

### Fire Safety

May 28: As of today, there are 65 active wildfires in Canada six of which are currently out of control. The total area burned so far this year is over 18,935 hectares. Forecasts indicate above-normal temperatures for nearly all Canadian regions for June, July, and August. While the Western part of the country is running behind in rainfall, several other regions have received significant amounts of precipitation over the past six months, which could delay potential wildfire conditions.

**Action Point:** With the wildfire season officially underway, it's important to implement a [Wildfire Smoke Protection Game Plan](#) to guard your workers against smoke exposure, both indoors and outdoors.

### New Laws

May 25: The federal government concluded public consultations on employment reform. Ideas on the table include stricter OHS requirements, adjusted timelines for collective bargaining, increased training support for workers impacted by artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, stronger protections against misclassification and wage theft, and ensuring that union rights carry over when contracts are retendered.

### New Laws

Apr 15: The Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture introduced new draft [regulations](#) mandating that federally regulated private companies use French in carrying out business activities so that French-speaking employees can perform their jobs and consumers can transact business in their native language. The rules would apply only to businesses with a specific minimum number of employees in Québec and, two years later, other designated regions with a significant Francophone population.

**Action Point:** Find out [whether you must provide multilingual safety training](#) to your workers.

### New Laws

May 4: The federal government is pushing forward with the one-time In-Canada Workers Initiative, announced in Budget 2025, to accelerate the transition of up to

33,000 workers in Canada to permanent residence in 2026 and 2027. As part of the initiative, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is initially accelerating eligible applications from existing inventories of work permit holders who've applied for permanent residence.

### **New Laws**

May 6: The federal government finalized [new regulations](#) that allow the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants to impose tighter controls on immigration consultants and impose stricter penalties on consultants who break the rules.

Effective date: July 15, 2026.

### **New Laws**

Apr 20: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill C-274](#) proposes to amend the *Citizenship Act* to provide a path to citizenship for certain persons who weren't citizens when they transitioned out of the care of a child welfare agency or foster parent. The Bill would also amend the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to provide that a removal order can't be enforced against such persons who are applying for citizenship until a final decision is made on their application.

### **Industry Challenges**

May 29: The federal government announced a \$100 million investment to fund the design and construction of a demonstration plant for the deployment of Rio Tinto Alcan's ELYSIS™ aluminum electrolysis technology. The strategic purpose of the investment is to position Canada at the forefront of the global transition to low-carbon, high-value aluminum manufacturing. Aluminum is a strategic sector for Canada's economy, underpinning key industries including defence, aerospace, automotive, energy, and infrastructure.

### **Privacy**

July 10: July 10 is the deadline to participate in public review of the *Privacy Act*, which was adopted in 1983 to require federal institutions to safeguard the confidentiality of the personal information entrusted to them. The Treasury Board, which administers the Act, has [proposed changes](#) to modernize the law for the digital age.

**Action Point:** Find out more about how [privacy laws affect workplace safety](#).

### **Workplace Violence**

May 25: Debate continues on [Bill C-16](#) adding new sexual violence protections to the *Criminal Code*, including a new offence for engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward an intimate partner and making it a first degree murder to commit what's called "femicide" (when the victim is female), defined as murder against an intimate partner as part of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, sexual violence, human trafficking or motivated by hate. The bill would also provide for tougher penalties for manslaughter committed in those circumstances while making it easier for victims to prove they were subject to criminal harassment.

### **Workplace Violence**

May 27: Having passed the Senate, [Bill S-242](#) (*Georgina's Law*) requiring the federal government to develop a national action to prevent intimate partner violence and

support is through First Reading in the House of Commons. The government would have to propose the plan within one year and provide progress reports on its implementation every two years.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Violence and Harassment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

## Workplace Violence

May 27: In response to the spate of assaults on healthcare workers, the Senate passed and the House of Commons gave Second Reading to [Bill S-233](#) amending the *Criminal Code* to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a person who provides health services or a first responder to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.

## Drugs & Alcohol

May 29: The federal Minister for Internal Trade called on the provinces and territories to complete negotiations and implement direct-to-consumer sales of alcohol agreements that would allow Canadians to purchase wine, beer, or spirits directly from producers in other provinces.

## Environmental

May 28: [Bill S-4](#), which would extend the *Energy Efficiency Act* to include online sales and digital labels, has been reported out of Committee in the Senate. First enacted in 1995, the Act is designed to cut consumption of energy-using products while enabling consumers to make informed decisions about the energy consumption of the products they purchase.

## CASES

### Workplace Violence: Supreme Court Recognizes New Intimate Partner Violence Tort

In a 6-3 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized a new tort allowing victims of intimate partner violence to sue their abusive partners for money damages. The case upholds an Ontario trial court decision awarding \$100,000 to the wife who suffered physical assault, humiliation, intimidation, and conduct intending to inflict emotional distress from her husband over the course of her 16-year marriage. Unlike the Ontario high court, the Supreme Court concluded that currently existing torts aren't adequate to compensate the harms domestic violence victims suffer. To win damages under the new intimate partner violence tort, the claimant must show abusive conduct by which one intimate partner coerces and controls the other, thus depriving them of their autonomy, which may include egregious acts of physical and psychological violence, tactics of isolation, manipulation, humiliation, surveillance, economic abuse, sexual coercion, and intimidation that can control and entrap [[Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia](#), 2026 SCC 16 (CanLII), May 15, 2026].

**Action Point:** Intimate partner violence becomes an OHS compliance issue when it happens at the victim's workplace. Bottom Line: Simply having a workplace violence prevention plan isn't enough. You also need to incorporate protections against workplace domestic violence into the prevention plan. Find out how to implement

an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

### **Drugs & Alcohol: Total Ban on Workplace Drug Use by Safety-Sensitive Employees Is OK**

Shortly after Canada legalized cannabis in 2018, an airline adopted a new safety policy banning flight attendants, flight directors, and other high-risk employees from consuming any drug, whether legal or illegal, at work. The union claimed the policy was unreasonable and that affected employees' privacy rights outweighed the airline's safety concerns. But based on previous cases upholding similar bans and affirming the employer's overriding need to ensure that safety-sensitive employees are fit for duty, the federal arbitrator disagreed with the union and rejected the grievance [[CUPE, Local 4041 v. Air Transat](#), 2026 CanLII 44306 (CA SA), May 6, 2026].

**Action Point:** The key to the case is that the airline's no-drug policy was based not on zero tolerance or principles of laws and morals, but the universally accepted understanding that workers who perform safety-sensitive jobs must be fit for duty at all times. Find out how to create a legally sound [Substance Abuse & Fitness Duty for Policy](#) at your workplace.