

Ontario

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Transportation Safety

Jan 28: The government hired an engineering firm to complete design work on its plan to remove bike lanes and reinstate vehicle lanes on 3 of Toronto's most congested streets—Yonge Street, Bloor Street West, and University Avenue. Toronto commuters face the longest travel times in North America and the third-longest travel times in the world, according to mapping firm, TomTom.

Training

Jan 27: With the threat of U.S. trade tariffs looming, Ontario announced that it's investing an additional \$100 million in the province's Skills Development Fund Training Stream, bringing the total provincial investment in the SDF to \$1.5 billion. The money will go to training workers in manufacturing, construction, critical mineral extraction, and other critical skilled trades.

Action Point: Find out about [OHS training record and retention requirements](#) across Canada.

New Laws

Jan 17: Ontario launched the Regional Economic Development through Immigration (REDI) pilot program targeting highly skilled immigrants for rural and northern regions with a high demand for skilled labour. Under REDI, local employers in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Sarnia-Lambton, and Thunder Bay will be able to hire up to 800 additional workers for in-demand careers like healthcare, technology, and the skilled trades.

New Laws

Jan 23: In response to Ottawa's decision to further reduce the number of international students allowed to study in Canada, Ontario said it will continue to prioritize public postsecondary programs that help prepare graduates for in-demand jobs, including hospitality, manufacturing, automotive, and dentistry. Ontario expects to issue 116,740 student permits in 2025, including 32,579 for master's and doctoral degree programs.

Industry Challenges

Jan 28: To bolster support for farmers and the agri-food sector, Ontario announced that it's increasing annual funding for its Risk Management Program from \$150 million to \$250 million. The \$100 million increase will be phased in over a 3-year period, starting with a \$30 million increase for the 2025 program year, leading to an annual total of \$250 million by the 2027 program year. Producer premiums will

remain at 35% of government funding.

Workers' Comp

Mar 31: March 31st is the final day for Ontario Schedule 1 employers to submit their workers' comp payroll reports listing their actual 2024 costs and projected costs for 2025 to the WSIB to avoid potential late fees, interest, and penalties.

CASES

Excavation: Trench Collapse Results in Double Fatality and \$250,000 Fine

The north wall of an excavation collapsed on top of workers who were installing a catch basin system to carry out a road widening project, killing 2 workers and seriously injuring 2 others. MOL investigators determined that the excavation wall had a weaker layer of soil, making it a Type 3 - requiring shoring or sloping. But there was neither a support system for the weaker soil layer nor an engineering opinion attesting to the wall's stability, resulting in a \$250,000 fine against the employer [*Direct Underground Inc.*, [MOL News Release](#), January 22, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a 10-step [excavations safety and compliance game plan](#) to prevent trench deaths and OHS fines at your workplace.

Electrical Safety: Utility Fined \$250,000 for Failing to Safeguard Workers from Electrical Hazards

A worker suffered critical injuries after the copper wire they were holding contacted a live powerline. Although the powerline the crew was working on was deenergized, the rural 4.8 kilovolt powerline below them was still live and there was no cover-up barrier to separate the powerlines, which were about 20.5 feet apart. The employer was fined \$250,000 after pleading guilty to failing to ensure that work performed on or near electrical transmission or distribution systems was performed in accordance with OHS requirements. A supervisor was also fined \$12,000 for failing to take every reasonable precaution to safeguard workers from energized electrical equipment, installations, and conductors [*Hydro One Networks Inc.*, [MOL Press Release](#), January 15, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Electrical Safety Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Machine Guarding: Lockout Shortcut Costs Worker His Life & Employer \$180,000

A maintenance worker entering a stamping press to perform a troubleshooting operation turned off the machine but didn't lock it out. Upon finding the machine stopped, a second worker reset the light curtains and cycled the press without realizing that the maintenance worker was inside, causing the latter's death. The MOL investigator found that it was "common practice" for workers on the production floor not to use ram blocks for troubleshooting or maintenance work of a short duration. The employer was fined \$180,000 for failing to ensure that the motion of any part of the press that could endanger a worker was stopped and

blocked during maintenance work [*Saturn Tool & Die (Windsor) Inc.*, [MOL News Release](#), January 21, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Machine Guarding Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Infectious Illness: OK to Fire Exposed Worker for Not Following COVID Rules

Management of a mental health assistance facility took an overnight personal support worker off his shift after learning he had been exposed to coworkers infected with COVID. To make matters worse, he didn't inform his wife, who also worked at the facility, about his exposure. So, the facility fired him. The worker sued for discrimination based on a perceived disability. The Ontario Human Rights Commission dismissed his complaint, finding that he was terminated not for having COVID but for not following the facility's health rules and allowing his wife to expose residents and other workers to COVID infection risk [*Ovwodorum v. Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario*, 2025 ONSC 710 (CanLII), February 3, 2025].

Action Point: Use the [OHS Insider Infection Exposure Control Plan](#) template to guard against not just COVID but other potential infectious illness outbreaks at your workplace.