

## MARCH 2025 MONTH IN REVIEW

*A roundup of new legislation, regulations, government announcements, court cases, and arbitration rulings.*

# Federal

### LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### New Laws

Mar 13: In immediate retaliation, Canada imposed dollar-for-dollar 25% reciprocal tariffs on U.S. [steel products worth \\$12.6 billion and aluminum products worth \\$3 billion](#), as well as on \$14.2 billion of additional imported U.S. goods, including tools, computers and servers, display monitors, sport equipment, and cast-iron products.

These tariffs are in addition to Canada's 25% counter tariffs on \$30 billion of U.S. imports from the U.S., in response to U.S. tariffs put in place on March 4.

#### New Laws

Mar 7: The Government of Canada announced new measures to support workers and businesses affected by U.S. tariffs, including the Trade Impact Program through Export Development Canada to help exporters reach new markets, favourably priced loans through via the Business Development Bank of Canada, and new Farm Credit Canada financing for the food and agriculture industry.

#### Transportation Safety

Mar 7: The CRA and ESDC entered into a new a data-sharing arrangement that will make it easier for the government to carry out inspection and enforcement activity in the federally regulated road transportation sector. The arrangement is just the first step in a plan for broader cooperation between the CRA and Labour Program to crack down on worker misclassification, wage theft, and tax law violations.

**Action Point:** Find out how far you can go in [disciplining workers for distracted and dangerous driving](#).

#### Transportation Safety

Mar 8: The federal government and RCMP funded 8 innovative projects aimed at developing novel methods for reducing auto theft, including Smartphone-based security using biometrics and proximity detection, locking devices that use AI monitoring and AI-powered steering wheel locks.

### **Infectious Illness**

Mar 6: Canada has reported 227 measles cases, many requiring hospitalization, in the first 2 months of 2025, more than all of 2024 due to outbreaks in New Brunswick, Ontario, Québec, and Manitoba. Most cases involve unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children exposed in their communities, such as in social events, daycares, schools, and healthcare settings.

**Action Point:** Use the [OHS Insider Infection Exposure Control Plan](#) template to guard against measles, COVID, and other potential infectious illness outbreaks at your workplace.

### **Infectious Illness**

Feb 14: The Canadian Government reminded the public of the growing spread of syphilis. Cases of the sexually transmitted disease have nearly doubled from 2018 to 2023, from 6,371 to 12,135 cases. Congenital syphilis cases have also increased over the same period from 17 to 53.

### **Training**

Feb 21: The federal government will invest over \$75 million through the Sustainable Jobs Training Fund to support 8 projects offering training opportunities enabling over 10,000 workers across the country to gain the expertise needed for jobs in electric vehicle maintenance, green buildings and retrofits, low-carbon energy, and carbon management.

### **Privacy**

Mar 12: Ottawa announced that it will establish a cyber security standard for companies that handle sensitive unclassified government information in defence contracting. This the first phase in the implementation of the Canadian Program for Cyber Security Certification (CPCSC) to ensure that cyber security certification in Canada is handled by accredited bodies, certified assessors, and government oversight. The program's mandatory cyber security certification requirements will be made up of 3 levels: **level 1:** requiring an annual cyber security self-assessment; **level 2:** requiring external cyber security assessments, led by an accredited certification body; and **level 3:** requiring cyber security assessments conducted by National Defence.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a [legally sound video surveillance policy](#) to ensure safety in vehicles and at your workplace without violating workers' privacy rights in the process.

### **Privacy**

Feb 11: Canada became the 13<sup>th</sup> nation to sign the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the first international convention designed to regulate AI use.

### **Workplace Violence**

Mar 7: The federal government imposed new bans on 179 unique makes and models of assault-style firearms, which can no longer be legally possessed, sold in, or imported into Canada. The bans apply to firearms with semi-automatic action and sustained rapid-fire capability (tactical/military design with large magazine capacity) that are deemed to be not suitable for hunting or sport shooting.

**Action Point:** Find out when [threatening to bring a gun to work is grounds for terminating a worker](#).

## Environmental

Mar 5: The federal government announced new measures to control per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), aka “forever chemicals,” commonly found in everyday products, including clothing, electronics, food packaging, and cosmetics.

PFAS are a class of thousands of extremely persistent human-made substances. They are used in a wide range of products for their waterproofing, oil resistance, or non-stick properties. The government wants to add PFAS, excluding fluoropolymers, as a class to Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*.

**Action Point:** Find out about Canada’s [strict new requirements for reporting PFAS](#).

## CASES

### Fall Protection: Employer Fined \$40,000 for Fatal Scissor Lift Fall

A worker making repairs to the roof of a 53-foot trailer without wearing fall protection fell out of a scissor lift and crashed to the maintenance shop floor below. They died in the hospital a week later. The employer pled guilty to an OHS violation for failing to ensure safe use of the scissor lift and was fined \$40,000 [*Tri Corp Transportation*, February, 11, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [Fall Protection Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site to prevent incidents, fatalities and fines like these.

### Infectious Illness: CAF Pilot Discharged for COVID Vaccine Refusal Doesn’t Get EI Benefits

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) discharged a helicopter pilot for refusing to receive the COVID vaccine. The pilot asked CAF for an exemption from the mandatory vaccination policy based on his belief that receiving a vaccine that was developed via testing of fetal cells violated the tenets of his Roman Catholic faith. While acknowledging the sincerity of the pilot’s beliefs, CAF denied the exemption finding that allowing him to go unvaccinated would pose too great a danger to other squadron members. The EI Commission then ruled that the pilot was terminated for misconduct and denied him EI benefits. The Social Security Tribunal upheld the ruling and the case landed in the Federal Court of Appeal, which held that the SST decision was reasonable and refused to overturn it [*Zagol v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2025 FCA 40 (CanLII), February 19, 2025].

**Action Point:** Go to the OHS Insider site for an [explanation of the ground rules](#) that courts and regulators use to determine whether an infectious illness work refusal is justified.