

Ontario Employment Laws at a Glance

Employment law in Ontario is needed to make sure that employers treat their employees fairly, pay them enough money, give them a safe workplace, and take care of them if they get sick or injured. Employment law in Ontario is governed by four pieces of legislation:

The Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA)

This law tells employers how to treat workers fairly. The ESA is a law that sets minimum standards for workplaces in Ontario. It sets out the rights and responsibilities of both employees and employers in Ontario workplaces. It regulates such matters as hours of work, rest periods, overtime pay, minimum wage, benefit plans, medical leave (for the employee or if the employee needs to care for a sick family member), pregnancy and parental leave, other leaves of absence, vacation time and pay, and termination notice and pay.

The ESA: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/00e41>

A guide to the ESA: <https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pubs/guide/>

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), 1979

This law came into force in 1979, and its goal is to give a framework and tools to make Ontario's workplaces safe and healthy. It sets out the rights and duties of all parties in the workplace. Changes to the Act in 1990 and subsequent years continued the evolution of occupational health and safety legislation since its original enactment. These changes have strengthened the requirements for occupational health and safety in Ontario workplaces. The employers have the greatest responsibilities with respect to health and safety, but all workplace parties have a role to play to ensure that the requirements are met, and that health and safety are promoted, in the workplace.

The OHSA: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>

A guide to the OHSA: <https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/ohsa/>

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

This Act replaces an older Act that made sure that workers who got injured on the job would get the financial support they needed. The old Worker's Compensation Act was passed in Ontario in 1914. The new legislation was passed in 1997, and moved toward a less centralized system of compensation, with less of the costs of compensation being paid by the Government of Ontario and more focus on each organization's internal health and safety systems. The levels of compensation were also somewhat reduced at

the same time. The Worker's Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) administers claims and payments.

The Act: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/97w16>

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB): <http://www.wsib.on.ca>

The Ontario Human Rights Code, 1962

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) was passed in 1962, and was the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It replaced the province's existing anti-discrimination legislation. It prohibits discrimination in accommodation (housing); contracts; employment; goods, services and facilities; and membership in unions, trade or professional associations on the grounds of: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, and disability. Gender identity and gender expression were added to the list of grounds in 2012.

The OHRC: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

The Ontario Human Rights Commission: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>