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Newfoundland and Labrador provincial legislation guide

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Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
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Introduction

This guide provides a brief overview of key employment, health and safety, privacy, and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador. For each piece of legislation, we outline why it is important to employers and how it relates to DEIA, who and what it applies to, the latest date of amendment, the key requirements for employers (highlighting how the legislation specifically affects workplace practices), and the penalties for non-compliance. This guide is intended for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

We encourage organizations to use this guide as a starting point for understanding their obligations under the law. However, this guide is not exhaustive and there are details, exceptions, and nuances in the legislation that require further reading or consultation to fully understand and apply. Additionally, while the information and links provided are accurate at the time of publication, this guide is not updated with every legislative change. Users should review the relevant legislation to confirm current requirements.

While compliance with the law is the baseline, we also recommend that organizations go beyond compliance where possible, proactively building workplaces that prioritize safety, inclusion, and equity in policies, practices, and culture.

Note that this resource covers legislation specific to one province or territory. A Canadian federal legislation guide is also available.

Accessibility Act

Why this legislation matters

The Accessibility Act establishes legal requirements to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. By setting shared standards and requiring organizations to plan for accessibility, they help ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully in employment and access services without discrimination.

Note: This is newly enacted framework legislation. More detailed requirements and enforcement mechanisms will be established as regulations and accessibility standards are developed.

Applies to

- Public bodies, including provincial government departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, municipalities, health authorities, and educational institutions.
- May apply to private-sector employers in the future.

Latest amendment

- 2025-01-01

Requirements for employers

- Develop an accessibility plan with input from persons with disabilities.
- Implement barrier removal measures across areas like services, employment, built environment, etc.
- Monitor and report on progress.
- Prepare to comply with future accessibility standards. These standards will likely address specific employment practices, customer service, information and communications, and the built environment.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Specific penalties are not yet fully defined in detail.

Further reading

- [Accessibility Act](#)
- [Accessibility Act](#), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Why this legislation matters

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) shapes how public bodies treat people's personal information and access to information, ensuring personal information is handled fairly, securely, and transparently. The Act helps protect individuals, particularly those from marginalized groups, from misuse of their data.

Applies to

- Public bodies, including provincial government departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, municipalities, health authorities, school boards and public educational institutions.

Latest amendment

- 2025-06-02

Requirements for employers

- For public bodies, ATIPPA sets requirements around access to information and protection of privacy. For example, organizations must:
 - Collect, use, and disclose personal information only as authorized.
 - Safeguard against unauthorized access or disclosure.
 - Only collect what is necessary for a lawful purpose.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Penalties include fines of up to \$10,000, up to 6 months' imprisonment, or both.

Further reading

- [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Office](#)
- [Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner](#)

Labour Standards Act

Why this legislation matters

The Labour Standards Act sets minimum workplace rights and protections for nearly all employees in Newfoundland and Labrador. It provides the legal foundation for fair, consistent, and equitable treatment of employees.

Applies to

- Most employers and employees in Newfoundland and Labrador, with some exceptions (e.g., federally regulated industries and specific occupations).

Latest amendment

- 2024-12-04

Requirements for employers

- The Act sets out the minimum standards for key employment conditions, including:
 - Wages and pay practices
 - Hours of work, rest periods, and overtime
 - Vacation, public holidays, and job-protected leaves
 - Termination and severance
 - Youth employment protections

Penalties for non-compliance

- Employers may face orders to pay unpaid wages or entitlements, administrative penalties, and prosecution leading to fines.

Further reading

- [Labour Standards Act](#)
- [Labour Standards Frequently Asked Questions](#), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act

Why this legislation matters

The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act protects against discrimination in significant areas of daily life. Specifically, the Code prohibits discrimination based on protected grounds in several key areas of employment.

Applies to

- Employers, employees, and service providers in Newfoundland and Labrador, including both the public and private sectors.

Latest amendment

- 2013-12-10

Requirements for employers

- Prohibit discrimination in employment based on protected grounds.
- Ensure equitable employment practices across hiring, promotion, compensation, and termination.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for needs related to disability, religion, or other protected grounds, to the point of undue hardship.
- Maintain harassment-free workplaces by preventing and addressing discriminatory harassment.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Penalties focus on correcting discrimination and preventing future occurrences.
- Orders from the Human Rights Commission may include compensation for lost wages, damages for injury to dignity, and required policy or workplace changes.

Further reading

- [Human Rights Act](#)
- [Employers Guide to the Human Rights Act](#), Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Why this legislation matters

The Occupational Health and Safety Act aims to protect everyone in the workplace from injury, illness, and unsafe conditions. It provides the legal foundation for safe and healthy work environments.

Applies to

- Most employers, employees, and workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador, with limited exceptions (e.g., federally regulated workplaces).

Latest amendment

- 2024-12-02

Requirements for employers

- Ensure a safe workplace by taking all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers.
- Identify and control hazards including conducting risk assessments and implementing appropriate safety measures.
- Provide training, supervision, and information to ensure workers can perform their jobs safely.
- Establish health and safety committees or representatives as required.
- Organizations with 20 or more employees are required to establish and maintain a formal [occupational health and safety \(OHS\) program](#).

Penalties for non-compliance

- Employers may face compliance orders, stop work orders, administrative penalties, and prosecution resulting in significant fines and potential imprisonment.

Further reading

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [WorkplaceNL](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act Overview](#), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Act

Why this legislation matters

The Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Act helps address systemic gender-based pay discrimination by requiring employers to ensure jobs predominantly held by women are paid equally to comparable jobs predominantly held by men. The Act also aims to make compensation practices more visible, leading to fairer wages and more equitable outcomes.

Note: This is newly enacted, phased-in legislation, with pay equity and pay transparency requirements coming into force gradually across sectors through regulations.

Applies to

- Pay equity provisions currently apply to the executive and legislative branch of the provincial government. At a future date, provisions will expand to public-sector employers with 10+ employees.
- Pay transparency provisions are intended to apply to both public and private-sector employers once fully in force.

Latest amendment

- 2025-01-01

Requirements for employers

- Establish and maintain pay equity (public sector) by ensuring compensation is based on the value of work regardless of gender and reporting on pay equity measures.
- Comply with pay transparency rules (public and private sector, once in force) including posting salary ranges in job postings, not asking about pay history, not penalizing employees for discussing pay, and preparing pay transparency reports where required.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Employers may face offences under the Act, with fines of up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$25,000 for corporations or public bodies.

Further reading

- [Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Act](#)
- [Newfoundland and Labrador Introduces Pay Equity & Transparency Law](#), Stewart McKelvey

Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act

Why this legislation matters

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act establishes the no-fault workplace insurance system administered by WorkplaceNL. The Act ensures all workers have equal access to injury benefits, rehabilitation, and return-to-work support.

Applies to

- Most employers (including sole proprietors, partnerships, corporations, municipalities, associations, societies) and workers (including full-time, part-time, or casual employees and sub-contractors) in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Some industries may be exempt, but they can choose to opt in for coverage.

Latest amendment

- 2025-08-29

Requirements for employers

- Register with the WorkplaceNL and pay assessments.
- Cooperate with claims processes for workplace injuries and illnesses, including reporting incidents and supporting injured workers.
- Support return-to-work and accommodation by re-employing injured workers where possible and modifying work or duties up to the point of undue hardship.
- Maintain safe workplaces and participate in prevention efforts in coordination with WorkplaceNL programs and requirements.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Employers may face financial penalties, increased assessments, or enforcement actions for failing to comply with the Act.
- Serious or willful offences under the Act can lead to fines up to \$25,000 and possible imprisonment.

Further reading

- [Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act](#)
- [WorkplaceNL](#)