

[Company Name]

HR COMPLIANCE ESSENTIALS MANUAL

Comprehensive Guide to HR Policies and Compliance

Ontario 2025 / 2026 Legislation Compliant

Provided by People Passion Products

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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER AND CUSTOMIZATION NOTES

This HR Compliance Essentials Manual is designed based on Ontario 2025 and 2026 legislation and best practices. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy and compliance, laws and regulations may change. Have qualified legal counsel review this manual before full implementation.

Legal review of a completed manual is often far more cost-effective than building one from scratch.

HOW TO CUSTOMIZE THIS DOCUMENT

Step 1: Use Find and Replace (Ctrl+H) to replace all instances of [Company Name] with your organization's name.

Step 2: Replace [Company Logo] placeholders with your logo.

Step 3: Review and update all policies to reflect your specific workplace practices.

Step 4: Have a qualified HR professional or employment lawyer review the finalized document.

LEGISLATION UPDATES IN THIS VERSION

This manual has been updated to reflect the following Ontario ESA changes:

- Long-Term Illness Leave (27 weeks unpaid), effective June 19, 2025
- Job Seeking Leave for mass termination, effective November 27, 2025
- Extended Temporary Layoff provisions, effective November 27, 2025
- Job Posting Transparency Rules (compensation disclosure, AI disclosure, no Canadian experience requirements, 45-day candidate notification), effective January 1, 2026
- No doctor's note for the three ESA sick days, effective October 28, 2024

Want a PDF completed with your company name, logo, and letterhead? Contact us at peoplepassionproducts.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Policy 1: Health and Safety Policy
2. Policy 2: Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy
3. Policy 3: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
4. Policy 4: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Policy
5. Policy 5: Pay Equity Policy
6. Policy 6: Electronic Monitoring Policy
7. Policy 7: Disconnecting from Work Policy
8. Policy 8: Recruitment and Selection Policy
9. Policy 9: Performance Management Policy
10. Policy 10: Attendance Management Policy
11. Policy 11: Leave of Absence Policy
12. Policy 12: Progressive Discipline Policy
13. Policy 13: Termination Policy
14. Policy 14: Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
15. Policy 15: Technology Use and Cybersecurity Policy
16. Policy 16: Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Policy
17. Policy 17: WHMIS Policy
18. Policy 18: Ontario Human Rights Policy

Policy 1: Health and Safety Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees in compliance with the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).

Scope

All employees, contractors, visitors, and vendors at [Company Name] premises.

Policy Details

- [Company Name] will comply with the Ontario OHSA and all applicable regulations.
- All employees must complete Health and Safety training upon hire and annual refreshers.
- Hazard assessments will be conducted regularly and corrective actions documented promptly.
- Personal Protective Equipment must be used in designated areas.
- Employees must report unsafe conditions, incidents, or hazards immediately to their supervisor.
- Emergency procedures are clearly posted and all employees are trained on evacuation plans.
- First aid kits and trained first aid providers will be maintained as required by Ontario Regulation 1101.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure compliance, provide training, and enforce safety measures.
- Employees: Follow safety protocols, report hazards, and wear required PPE.
- HR: Maintain records of training, incident reports, and safety audits.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 2: Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to ensuring a workplace free from harassment, violence, and discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the OHSA.

Scope

All employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors.

Policy Details

- [Company Name] prohibits harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination based on any protected ground.
- All employees must complete harassment prevention training upon hire and annually thereafter.
- Reports of harassment can be made to HR or a direct supervisor and will be kept confidential to the extent possible.
- All complaints will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken against any employee found to have engaged in harassment.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure a harassment-free environment and respond to complaints promptly.
- Employees: Report incidents and participate in investigations as required.
- HR: Investigate claims, maintain confidentiality, and document findings.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 3: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to a safe and secure work environment for all. This policy outlines our commitment to prevent workplace violence in compliance with the Ontario OHSA.

Scope

All employees, contractors, vendors, visitors, and anyone conducting business on behalf of [Company Name].

Policy Details

- [Company Name] strictly prohibits workplace violence, including threats, physical force, and any behavior posing a safety risk.
- All employees must complete mandatory violence prevention training upon hire and annually thereafter.
- Incidents can be reported confidentially through direct supervisors or HR.
- Retaliation against anyone who reports violence or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.
- All investigations will be conducted promptly and confidentially.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure a violence-free workplace and respond to complaints promptly.
- Employees: Maintain a respectful environment and report any violations.
- HR: Investigate claims thoroughly and maintain documentation.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 4: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to ensuring accessible and inclusive services and employment for all persons under the AODA and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

Scope

All employees, contractors, vendors, visitors, and anyone interacting with [Company Name].

Policy Details

- [Company Name] is committed to providing accessible services that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- All employees must complete AODA training upon hire and annually thereafter.
- Information and communications will be provided in accessible formats upon request.
- The physical environment will be maintained barrier-free where required by legislation.
- Employees requiring accommodation should submit a request to HR.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure all services and employment practices are accessible.
- Employees: Participate in AODA training and report any barriers.
- HR: Manage accommodation requests and maintain records.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 5: Pay Equity Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to pay equity in the workplace under the Ontario Pay Equity Act, ensuring equal compensation for work of equal value regardless of gender.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- [Company Name] evaluates job classifications to ensure pay equity across all departments.
- Annual pay equity assessments are conducted to identify and correct any discrepancies.
- Employees may request a review of their compensation if they believe it is not equitable.
- HR maintains records of pay equity assessments and adjustments.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure fair and transparent pay practices.
- Employees: Report any concerns regarding pay equity.
- HR: Conduct annual pay assessments and maintain documentation.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 6: Electronic Monitoring Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to transparency in its monitoring of electronic communications and devices used by employees, in compliance with Ontario requirements.

Scope

All employees who use company-provided electronic devices, communication platforms, and internet access.

Policy Details

- [Company Name] monitors electronic communications to ensure data security, protect confidential information, and maintain productivity.
- Monitoring includes email and messaging platforms, internet browsing history, software application usage, and GPS tracking where applicable.
- Employees will be informed upon hire and during annual refreshers about the extent of monitoring.
- Personal devices are not monitored unless connected to company networks or applications.
- Data collected through monitoring will only be accessed by authorized personnel for legitimate business purposes.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure proper use of monitoring tools and compliance with privacy laws.
- Employees: Understand that activities on company devices are subject to monitoring.
- HR and IT: Maintain monitoring records and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 7: Disconnecting from Work Policy

Objective

[Company Name] respects the work-life balance of its employees and their right to disconnect from work-related communications outside scheduled hours, in compliance with Ontario's Working for Workers Act, 2021.

Scope

All full-time, part-time, and contract employees.

Policy Details

- Employees are not expected to respond to work-related communications outside scheduled hours, except in emergencies.
- Managers must respect employees' right to disconnect and avoid after-hours communication unless absolutely necessary.
- Employees should set out-of-office notifications when unavailable.
- [Company Name] will not penalize employees for exercising their right to disconnect.

Responsibilities

- Management: Encourage work-life balance and respect the right to disconnect.
- Employees: Set boundaries and communicate availability to their teams.
- HR: Monitor compliance and handle any disputes.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 8: Recruitment and Selection Policy

UPDATED 2026: *This policy has been updated to reflect Ontario job posting transparency requirements effective January 1, 2026 (Working for Workers Four Act, 2024). All job postings must comply with new compensation disclosure, AI disclosure, and candidate notification rules.*

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to a fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment and selection process in compliance with Ontario's Human Rights Code and Employment Standards Act.

Scope

All recruitment and selection activities, including internal and external postings, interviews, and hiring decisions.

Policy Details

- Job postings will be publicly available and include clear descriptions of qualifications and responsibilities.
- All candidates will be evaluated based on merit, experience, skills, and alignment with company values.
- Interviews will be conducted using a standardized set of questions to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Recruitment decisions will be free from bias and in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- **COMPENSATION DISCLOSURE** (effective January 1, 2026): All publicly advertised job postings for employers with 25 or more employees must include the expected compensation or a salary range. Ranges are limited to a maximum of \$50,000. Roles with compensation over \$200,000 are exempt.
- **CANADIAN EXPERIENCE PROHIBITION** (effective January 1, 2026): Job postings must not require applicants to have Canadian experience as a condition of consideration.
- **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DISCLOSURE** (effective January 1, 2026): If artificial intelligence tools are used to screen, assess, or select applicants, this must be disclosed in the job posting.
- **VACANCY DISCLOSURE** (effective January 1, 2026): Job postings must state whether they are for an existing vacancy.
- **CANDIDATE NOTIFICATION** (effective January 1, 2026): All interviewed candidates must be notified of the hiring decision within 45 days of their last interview. Non-compliance can lead to prosecution under the Employment Standards Act. Individuals can be fined up to \$100,000. Corporations can be fined up to \$100,000 for a first conviction, \$250,000 for a second, and \$500,000 for a third or subsequent conviction.

Responsibilities

- **Management:** Ensure fair and transparent hiring practices compliant with 2026 ESA requirements.

- HR: Manage the recruitment process, maintain documentation, and ensure job postings meet all disclosure requirements.
- Interviewers: Conduct interviews with professionalism and objectivity.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 9: Performance Management Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to maintaining high standards of performance. This policy outlines the process for evaluating employee performance, setting objectives, and providing constructive feedback.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- Employees will participate in an annual performance review to assess contributions and identify areas for growth.
- Performance expectations will be communicated clearly to all employees at the start of the review period.
- Managers will provide ongoing feedback to support employee development.
- Performance reviews will be documented and stored securely by HR.
- Employees may be placed on Performance Improvement Plans if their performance does not meet expectations.

Responsibilities

- Management: Set clear expectations and provide regular feedback.
- Employees: Actively participate in performance discussions and work toward goals.
- HR: Maintain performance records and manage improvement plans.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 10: Attendance Management Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to promoting punctuality and consistent attendance. This policy outlines expectations and procedures for addressing absences.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- Employees are expected to maintain regular attendance and arrive on time.
- Unscheduled absences must be reported to a supervisor as soon as possible, before the start of the shift where possible.
- Patterns of absenteeism or tardiness may lead to disciplinary action.
- A doctor's note cannot be required for the three ESA sick days, but reasonable evidence, such as a signed self-declaration, may be requested. Medical documentation may be required for longer absences.
- HR will track attendance records and provide reports to management.

Responsibilities

- Management: Monitor attendance and address issues promptly.
- Employees: Report absences promptly and provide required documentation.
- HR: Maintain attendance records and manage leave requests.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 11: Leave of Absence Policy

UPDATED 2026: *Long-Term Illness Leave (27 weeks unpaid, effective June 19, 2025) and Job Seeking Leave for mass termination situations (3 days unpaid, effective November 27, 2025) have been added to reflect Ontario ESA amendments under the Working for Workers Acts.*

Objective

[Company Name] recognizes that employees may require time away from work. This policy outlines the types of leave available, eligibility criteria, and the process for requesting and approving leave under the Ontario ESA.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- **SICK LEAVE:** Employees are entitled to three days of unpaid sick leave per calendar year under the Ontario ESA. A doctor's note cannot be required for these three days, but reasonable evidence, such as a signed self-declaration, may be requested. Medical documentation may be required for absences beyond the ESA sick leave entitlement.
- **VACATION LEAVE:** Vacation entitlements are outlined in employment contracts and comply with Ontario ESA minimums (two weeks after one year, three weeks after five years for employers subject to ESA vacation provisions).
- **PARENTAL LEAVE:** Eligible employees are entitled to maternity leave (up to 17 weeks), parental leave (up to 63 weeks for birth parent or 61 weeks for other parent), or adoption leave in accordance with Ontario ESA.
- **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE:** Employees are entitled to up to two days of unpaid leave upon the death of a family member under the ESA, or as outlined in company policy if more generous.
- **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY LEAVE:** Up to three days of unpaid leave per calendar year for illness, injury, or urgent matters relating to the employee's family members.
- **DOMESTIC OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE LEAVE:** Eligible employees may take up to 10 days and up to 15 weeks of leave for reasons related to domestic or sexual violence. The first five days taken in each calendar year are paid.
- **CRITICAL ILLNESS LEAVE:** Eligible employees may take up to 37 weeks to provide care for a critically ill child or up to 17 weeks for a critically ill adult family member.
- **FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE:** Employees may take up to 8 weeks of unpaid leave per calendar year to provide care or support to a family member with a serious medical condition.
- **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE:** Employees may take up to 28 weeks of unpaid leave in a 52-week period to care for a family member who has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.
- **LONG-TERM ILLNESS LEAVE (effective June 19, 2025):** Employees employed for at least 13 consecutive weeks are entitled to up to 27 weeks of unpaid leave in a 52-week period due to a serious medical condition certified by a qualified health practitioner.
- **JOB SEEKING LEAVE (effective November 27, 2025):** Employees who receive notice of mass termination (50 or more employees in a 4-week period) are entitled to three unpaid days of leave to search for work, attend interviews, or complete training.

- JURY DUTY AND COURT LEAVE: Employees summoned for jury duty or court appearances are granted unpaid leave for the duration of their service.

Responsibilities

- Management: Review leave requests and ensure adequate coverage.
- Employees: Submit requests with proper documentation and reasonable notice.
- HR: Track leave usage, maintain records, and ensure compliance with ESA.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 12: Progressive Discipline Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to maintaining a productive and respectful work environment. This policy outlines the process for managing employee performance and addressing policy violations through progressive discipline.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- The progressive discipline process consists of: Step 1 - Verbal Warning; Step 2 - Written Warning; Step 3 - Suspension (if necessary); Step 4 - Termination.
- Disciplinary actions will be documented and retained in the employee's HR file.
- Employees will be given an opportunity to correct behaviour before escalation, except in cases of severe misconduct.
- HR and management will collaborate on the disciplinary process to ensure fairness and compliance.
- Serious misconduct may result in immediate termination with cause, bypassing earlier stages.

Responsibilities

- Management: Identify performance or conduct issues and initiate the discipline process.
- Employees: Comply with company policies and correct behaviour when identified.
- HR: Document disciplinary actions, provide guidance to management, and ensure compliance.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 13: Termination Policy

UPDATED 2026: *Extended temporary layoff provisions (up to 52 weeks in a 78-week period by mutual written agreement) effective November 27, 2025, have been added per Ontario ESA amendments.*

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to managing terminations with fairness, compliance, and professionalism in accordance with Ontario's Employment Standards Act.

Scope

All employees.

Policy Details

- Employees who voluntarily resign are expected to provide a minimum of two weeks' written notice.
- In cases of involuntary termination, [Company Name] will comply with the notice or severance requirements outlined in the ESA based on length of service.
- Termination with cause will be enacted immediately, with supporting documentation outlining the reasons.
- Employees terminated without cause will receive appropriate notice or pay in lieu of notice.
- A termination meeting will be held to provide all required documentation, including the Record of Employment (ROE) and final paycheck.
- TEMPORARY LAYOFF (amended November 27, 2025): The temporary layoff period may be extended beyond the usual 35 weeks in a 52-week period, up to 52 weeks in a 78-week period, if mutually agreed in writing and approved by the Director of Employment Standards.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure the termination process is handled professionally and consistently.
- Employees: Return company property and complete any exit requirements.
- HR: Manage documentation, ensure legal compliance, and handle final pay processing.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 14: Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of business information, employee records, and client data.

Scope

All employees, contractors, and third-party vendors with access to confidential information.

Policy Details

- Employees must maintain confidentiality of all business information and personal data during and after employment.
- Access to confidential information is limited to authorized personnel only.
- All electronic data must be stored securely and protected with passwords and encryption.
- Physical documents containing sensitive information must be stored in locked areas.
- Any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure compliance with confidentiality protocols.
- Employees: Protect confidential information and report any data breaches immediately.
- IT and HR: Maintain secure systems and handle privacy concerns promptly.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 15: Technology Use and Cybersecurity Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to ensuring responsible use of technological resources and protecting digital assets from cyber threats.

Scope

All employees, contractors, and vendors accessing [Company Name] systems.

Policy Details

- All company technology must be used responsibly and in compliance with company policies.
- Access to confidential and sensitive information is restricted to authorized personnel only.
- Employees must not install unauthorized software or applications on company devices.
- Employees are required to log out or lock screens when leaving workstations.
- Passwords must meet complexity requirements and be changed regularly.
- Sensitive data must be encrypted before being transmitted electronically.
- Remote access to company systems must be secured with multi-factor authentication.
- Cybersecurity awareness training will be provided to all employees annually.
- Any data breach must be reported immediately to IT and HR.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure compliance with technology use standards.
- Employees: Use company technology responsibly and report any breaches.
- IT: Monitor systems, manage access, and enforce cybersecurity policies.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 16: Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to health and safety for all employees through a Joint Health and Safety Committee in accordance with the Ontario OHSA.

Scope

All [Company Name] locations with 20 or more workers.

Policy Details

- A JHSC will be established where 20 or more employees are regularly employed.
- The committee will consist of both worker and management representatives.
- At least one worker member and one management member must be certified by the Ministry of Labour.
- The JHSC will meet at least quarterly to discuss health and safety concerns, workplace inspections, and incident investigations.
- Minutes of JHSC meetings will be documented and retained.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure JHSC members receive necessary training and are available for meetings.
- Employees: Participate in workplace inspections and report hazards to JHSC representatives.
- JHSC Members: Conduct inspections, identify hazards, and provide recommendations.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 17: WHMIS Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is committed to protecting employee health and safety from hazardous materials through compliance with the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) regulations.

Scope

All locations where hazardous materials are used or stored.

Policy Details

- All hazardous materials must be properly labeled with WHMIS-compliant labels.
- Safety Data Sheets for each hazardous material will be maintained and accessible to employees.
- WHMIS training will be provided to all employees upon hire and annually thereafter.
- All incidents involving hazardous materials must be reported immediately to management and documented.

Responsibilities

- Management: Ensure WHMIS training is current and materials are correctly labeled.
- Employees: Follow proper handling procedures and report unsafe conditions.
- Supervisors: Monitor employee compliance and conduct regular safety audits.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

Policy 18: Ontario Human Rights Policy

Objective

[Company Name] is dedicated to maintaining a workplace free from discrimination and harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Scope

All employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors.

Policy Details

- [Company Name] strictly prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected grounds as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- All employees must complete Ontario Human Rights training upon hire and every two years thereafter.
- Complaints of discrimination or harassment can be reported confidentially to HR.
- Investigations will be conducted promptly, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality.
- Accommodations will be provided upon request during recruitment, selection, and employment.

Responsibilities

- Management: Promote a discrimination-free workplace and address violations promptly.
- Employees: Report any instances of discrimination or harassment without fear of retaliation.
- HR: Conduct investigations and maintain records in compliance with privacy laws.

Review Cycle: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or company practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGN-OFF

I confirm that I have received, read, and understood the [Company Name] HR Policy Manual. I agree to comply with all policies contained herein.

Employee Name (Print): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledged by (Manager): _____

Date: _____

This form should be retained in the employee's HR file.

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