

Human rights. Laws to ensure fair employment practices have been enacted throughout Canada. These include employment and employment-related subjects such as membership in trade unions. All jurisdictions have augmented this legislation to form a human rights code. Northwest Territories and Yukon have enacted fair practices ordinances. Most of these codes cover general matters, employment and employment-related subjects, occupancy and property matters, and access to facilities and services generally available to the public.

Most jurisdictions prohibit discrimination on grounds of race, religion, national origin, colour, sex, age and marital status. In selected cases the prohibited grounds include political beliefs, ethnic origin, physical handicap, creed, source of income, ancestry, social condition, attachment or assignment of pay, and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

Equal pay provisions are in force across Canada. Criteria for determining the meaning of equal work vary from one act to another. Methods of enforcement also vary.

Apprenticeship. All provinces have apprenticeship laws providing for an organized procedure of on-the-job training and school instruction in designated skilled trades. Statutory provision exists in most for issuing qualification certificates, on application, to tradesmen in certain trades. In some provinces legislation is in effect making it mandatory for certain classes of tradesmen to hold a certificate of competency.

Accident prevention. In Canada both federal and provincial legislatures have the power to enact laws and regulations concerning the protection of workers against industrial accidents or diseases. However, the provinces have major jurisdiction in this field, with the federal authority limited to certain industries considered to be under federal regulation. Legal standards designed to ensure the safety, health and welfare of persons employed in resource, industrial and commercial establishments exist in all jurisdictions. Authorities responsible for administration of such standards are, in the main, the departments of labour, health, mines and worker compensation boards.

General safety laws and regulations cover most employment in the country. Safeguards for worker protection are established for fire safety, sanitation, heating, lighting, ventilation, protective equipment, materials handling, safety of tools, guarding of dangerous machinery, safe handling of explosives and protection against noise and radiation. In certain jurisdictions, workers have the right to refuse work in special circumstances where safety or health could be endangered.

Other safety laws and regulations are more specific. They concern hazardous equipment such as boilers and pressure vessels, electrical installations, elevating devices and equipment burning gas and oil. Others are directed toward hazardous industries such as mining, construction, demolition and logging.

Safety inspection is provided for in all jurisdictions. An inspector can give directions on any matter regulated by legislation. Penalties exist where an employer contravenes any provision of an occupational safety act or regulation or fails or neglects to comply with a direction made by an inspector or other authority.

Worker compensation. In Canada, compensation laws are generally within the competence of provincial legislatures and apply to most employers in each province. In all provinces compensation is provided for personal injuries sustained at work unless the disablement is for less than a set number of days or where injury is due to the worker's serious and wilful misconduct and does not result in death or serious disablement. Compensation is also payable for industrial diseases arising from work.

Each act provides for an accident fund administered by a compensation board to which employers are required to contribute and through which compensation and medical benefits are paid. The acts thus provide for a system of compulsory collective liability, relieving employers of individual responsibility for accident costs. Assessment rates for each class of industry are fixed by the board according to hazards of the class.

Various types of benefits are provided for a worker protected by compensation legislation. Benefits for disability are based on a percentage of average weekly earnings subject to an annual ceiling. Persons with a permanent or temporary total disability are