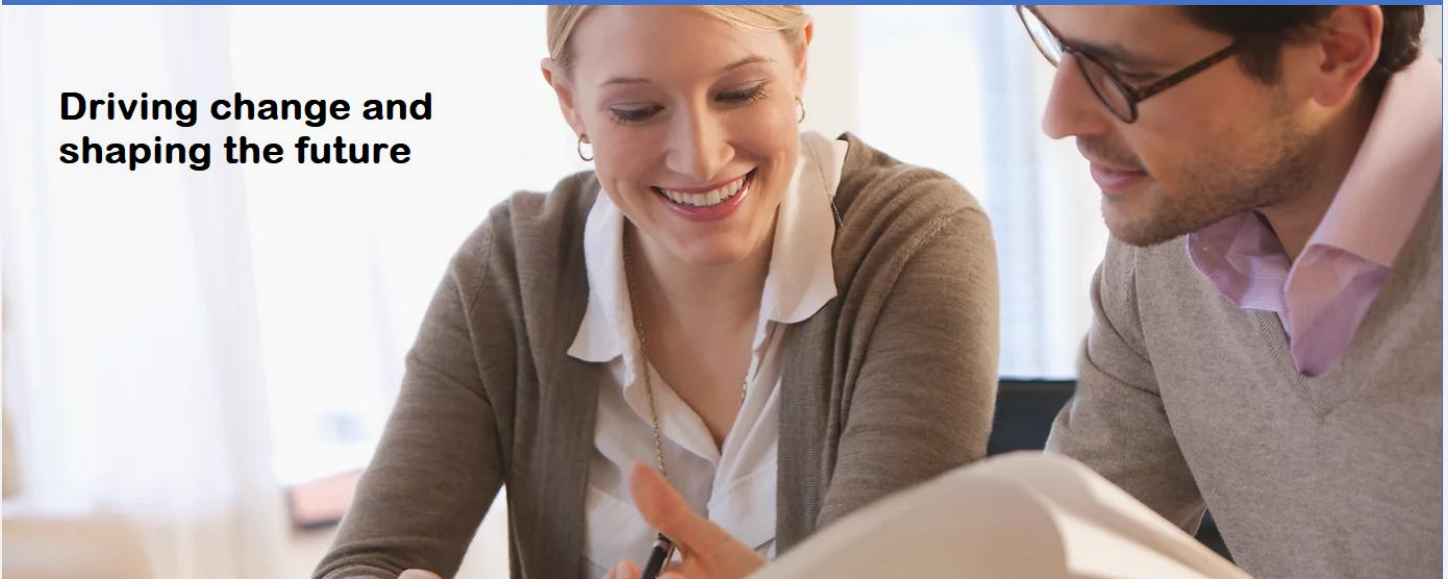


# HR QUARTERLY BULLETIN

SUMMER 2026

**Driving change and shaping the future**



## LEGAL UPDATES

Ontario introduces **Bill 105, Protecting Ontario's Workers and Economic Resilience Act, 2026 (POWER Act)** with proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act of Ontario (ESA) and Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)>

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

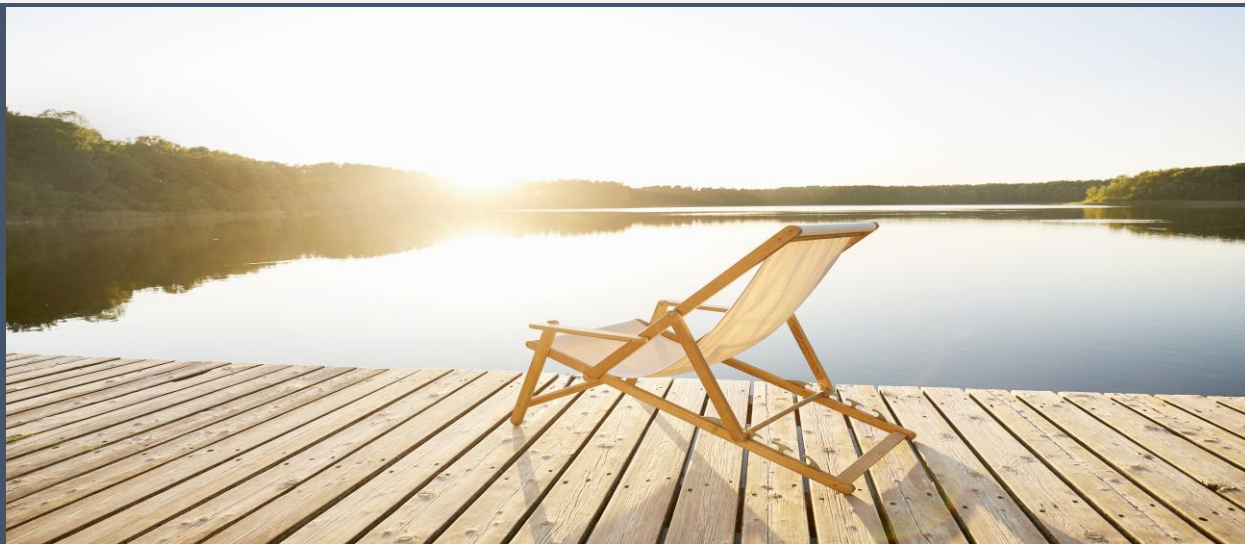
**Building Effective Return-to-work Programs.** Creating an environment where safety and well-being are at the centre of every decision is one of the clearest ways for an organization to demonstrate this commitment supporting employees who are injured or become ill.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

**Supporting Management and Employees After a Workplace Restructure.** While attention is often focused on employees who lose their jobs, the employees and managers who remain can also experience significant emotional and workplace challenges.



Employers have been adjusting to everchanging and shifting priorities. At S&G HR Consulting, Sandra & Marina support local businesses to adapt to these changes by providing consulting services, policy development, and training programs that fit their organization's unique, specific needs. For any additional questions, please contact us through our [website](#) or call us at [905-325-3396](tel:905-325-3396).



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

As part of its plan to protect Ontario and strengthen the province's competitiveness, the government is introducing **Bill 105, Protecting Ontario's Workers and Economic Resilience Act, 2026 (POWER Act)**. If passed, it would reduce red tape, speed up permits and approvals, and help businesses and workers move more quickly into high-demand opportunities

Proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act (ESA) include:

- Employers will be prohibited from charging employees for required uniforms or standard laundering, except in cases of employee loss, extraordinary damage, or failure to return items. If passed, these changes will be effective **January 1, 2027**.
- Introduce changes allowing the Director to assign certain complaints for inspection and to refuse to assign certain complaints for investigation or inspection in specified circumstances. This includes where the complaint is clearly frivolous, vexatious or where there is insufficient information to substantiate the complaint.
- Introduce changes to the rules for apportioning money collected in enforcement matters, ensuring that employees are paid first, with any remaining amounts divided among the collector, the Director and the Minister of Finance.

Proposed changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA) include:

- Permit the Chief Prevention Officer to collect personal information about workers' exposure to a physical, chemical or biological agent for the purpose of maintaining a worker occupational exposure registry and other purposes. It would also authorize the Ministry of Labour to reimburse prescribed employers and constructors for the cost of purchasing protective headwear.

Additional information can be found at: [Bill 105, Protecting Ontario's Workers and Economic Resilience Act, 2026 - Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#)

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Building Effective Return-to-work Programs

When employers, supervisors, workers, and health care partners work together, they create an environment where safety, dignity, and well-being are at the centre of every decision. One of the clearest demonstrations of this commitment is how an organization supports employees who are injured or become ill.



#### A Culture Rooted in Health and Safety:

A strong workplace culture begins with a clear commitment to health and safety. This commitment is demonstrated daily through the behaviour of everyone in the workplace; employers, supervisors, and workers. When everyone understands their role in maintaining a safe environment, the organization is better prepared to respond effectively when a worker needs support.

#### Timely, Respectful Communication

One of the strongest indicators of a supportive workplace is how it communicates with injured or ill workers throughout their recovery. Employers who reach out promptly help reduce uncertainty and reinforce that the worker is valued. This early contact sets the tone for the entire return-to-work process. With the employee's consent, employers and health care providers share information about job demands and functional abilities to ensure that decisions are informed, safe and aligned with the worker's needs.

#### Thoughtful and Collaborative Return-to-Work Planning

Return-to-work (RTW) planning ensures that each plan is tailored, realistic, and supportive to understand the worker's abilities, demands of the job, and the operational needs of the organization. A well-designed RTW plan helps workers reintegrate smoothly and reduces the risk of reinjury. Training managers and supervisors in work disability prevention also ensures they can better support employees and foster a positive transition back to work.

#### Supporting Workers Through Modified Duties

It is the employer's responsibility to offer modified duties or work accommodation to employees recovering from injury or illness. These accommodations allow workers to return in a safe and timely manner to tasks that match their current abilities. Effective modified work programs support recovery and help maintain a connection to the workplace, reduce stress, and promote long-term well-being.

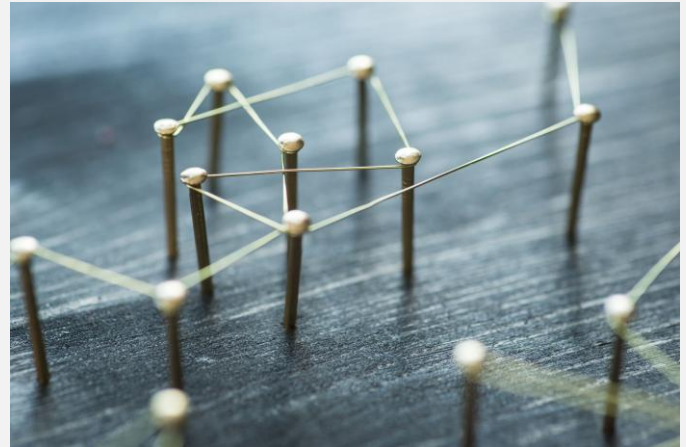
#### A Shared Commitment to Well-Being

When everyone in the workplace works together, the result is a system that supports people when they need it most. A strong return-to-work program is not just about compliance; it is about compassion, respect, and the belief that every worker deserves a safe and supported path back to meaningful work.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### Supporting Management and Employees After a Workplace Restructure: Helping the Survivors Recover

Workplace restructuring has become increasingly common across Canada as organizations respond to economic pressures, technological change, and shifting business priorities. While attention is often focused on employees who lose their jobs, the employees and managers who remain can also experience significant emotional and workplace challenges.



After a restructuring, employees face uncertainty, increased workloads, and anxiety about future job security. Many experience what is known as “survivor syndrome,” which can include guilt for remaining employed while coworkers were laid off, fear about additional changes, and decreased trust in leadership. These feelings can negatively affect morale, productivity, and workplace relationships if not addressed properly. Managers are also deeply impacted and are often responsible for communicating difficult decisions while continuing to lead teams through periods of instability. At the same time, managers may be coping with their own stress, uncertainty, and increased responsibilities. Without proper organizational support, many leaders experience burnouts and emotional exhaustion.

Clear and honest communication is one of the most important ways organizations can support employees. Canadian workplaces benefit when leaders provide timely updates, explain the reasons for changes, and outline future. Employees are more likely to trust leadership when communication is transparent and consistent. Poor communication often increases fear, rumours, and disengagement.

Mental health support is equally important during recovery periods. Employers should ensure employees have access to support such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counselling services, wellness initiatives, and flexible work options where possible. Encouraging open discussions about stress and mental health can help reduce stigma and create a more supportive workplace.

Organizations must also carefully manage workloads. Remaining employees are often expected to absorb additional duties, which can quickly lead to burnout. Leaders should reassess priorities, distribute work fairly, and provide training to help employees adapt to new responsibilities.

Rebuilding trust and workplace culture takes time. Employees are more likely to recover when leaders demonstrate empathy, recognize employee contributions, and involve staff in rebuilding the organization moving forward. Supporting both management and is essential for long-term success. Organizations that prioritize communication, mental health, and compassionate leadership are better positioned to rebuild morale, retain employees, and create a more resilient workplace culture.

#### **Resources:**

For your free Organizational Assessment, click [here](#)

For access to further resources and useful links relating to Covid-19, health and safety mandates, and public health updates, please visit: [S&G HR Consulting Resources](#).